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THE FRIENDSHIPS

OF

MARY RUSSELL MITFORD.

VOL. II.

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THE FRIENDSHIPS

OF

MARY RUSSELL MITFORD

AS RECORDED IN LETTERS FROM

HER LITERARY CORRESPONDENTS

EDITED BY

THE REV. A. G. L'ESTRANGE

EDITOR OF "THE LIFE OF MARY RUSSELL MITFORD," AND AUTHOR OF "THE LIFE OF THE REV. W. HARNESS," "THE VILLAGE OF PALACES," ETC. ETC.

"Whoever reads my letters, that is the letters written *to* me, will find them interesting."—M. R. MITFORD *to* J. T. FIELDS.

IN TWO VOLS.—VOL. II.

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THE FRIENDSHIPS

OF

MARY RUSSELL MITFORD.

CHAPTER I.

LETTERS FROM GEORGE DARLEY, HARRIET MARTINEAU, LADY DACRE, AND MISS MITFORD.

GEORGE DARLEY, the writer of the next letter, was the son of a Dublin alderman, who disinherited him because he devoted his time to writing poetry. He was thus compelled to support himself as best he could by literature, and labouring under the disadvantage of stammering—which he calls his *mask*—kept apart from society. Miss Mitford says that she hears he is 'a very elegant and excellent person,' and adds: 'I should think him interesting if his disappointment in not being acknowledged one of the great poets of the age had not produced the most intolerable fastidiousness and determination to disallow all merit in other writers.' Darley was the author of 'Sylvia, or the May Queen,' and other

poems; of some plays; of contributions to the London magazines, and of letters on art to the *Athenæum*. Miss Barrett says that 'he wrote a beautiful, tuneful pastoral once—"Sylvia, or the May Queen"—but the thing wanted is passion, pathos, if not a *besides*.' One of his songs, 'I've been Roaming,' was for years the rival of 'Cherry Ripe.'

GEORGE DARLEY *to* MISS MITFORD.

8, Beaumont Street, Oxford, August 22 [1836?].

I cannot refrain, even at the risk of egotism, dear Miss Mitford, from expressing my pleasure and pride at your reception of my sorry little poetical tract, 'Nepenthe.' Praise in general is to me more painful than censure, compliments as formal as those of 'the season' from visitors, the frozen admiration of friends, I shudder in the heart at all this; but one word of real enthusiasm such as yours is happiness, hope, and inspiration to me. Such as yours, I say, for when, together with being enthusiastic, praise is discriminative, it becomes to me what a feather is to an eaglet; argue as we will, the spirit cannot soar without it. Mine has been, I confess, for a long time like one of Dante's sinners, floating and bickering about in the shape of a *fiery tongue* on the Slough of Despond. If it ever has risen, 'twas an *ignis fatuus* for a moment only. Seven long years did I live on a charitable saying of Coleridge's, that he sometimes liked to take up 'Sylvia.' What you say of her and 'Nepenthe' will keep the pulse of hope (which is the life of the spirit) going, so that I shall not die inwardly before the death of the flesh. Many do, it is my firm belief,

who, alas! have had still more ambition, and less success than I. Murder is done every night upon genius by neglect and scorn. You may ask, could I not sustain myself on the strength of my own approbation? But it might be only my vanity, not my genius, that was strong. Pye and Cibber no doubt did so, conceited themselves writing for posterity, which indeed they were—for its *ridicule*. Milton and Wordsworth are not instances; they had from the first many admirers, though far from as many as they deserved. Have not I, too, had some, however few, approvers? Why, yes, but their chorus in my praise was as small as the voice of my conscience, and, like it, served for little else than to keep me uneasy. You see, I am shriving myself to you, as if, like the Lady of Loretto, you were *made* of indulgences.

Do not, I know you will not, let me lose your esteem for thus avowing the 'last infirmity.' Milton, you remember, excuses it. I could defend it too. There are the stars as well as the bubbles of ambition; the one brightly solid, and exalted, and 'age remaining;' the other glittering, short-lived inanities of our own low sphere. Should we not endeavour to approach towards the most High in *all* His perfections, intelligence as well as goodness? Believe me, I am far above the vulgar desire for *popularity*. I have none of that heartburn. Indeed who of any pride but must feel as high as scorn above public praise when we see on what objects it is lavished? Should I stand a hairbreadth more exalted in my own esteem by displacing for a day such or such a poetaster from his pedestal? But, candidly, judicious

praise is grateful to me as frankincense, partly no doubt for the love of fame, born with us like our other appetites, and greatly do I feel from its being the proof that my supposed path towards the Centre of Light is not an aberration. To seek, and to keep such path should be everyone's immortal object, because there alone is he the best co-efficient in advancing himself and the human system. Here you have my intellectual creed; how it should have come into such a letter I cannot tell, but I have seldom the power to direct my mind, and must *only* follow it.

You are quite right about 'Sylvia;' the grotesque parts offend grievously against good taste. I acknowledge the error, and deplore it. But the truth is my mind was born among the rude old dramatists, and has imbibed some of their *ogre* milk, which gave more of its coarseness than strength to my efforts. And again 'Sylvia' was written in the gasping times of laborious scientific engagements. All its prose especially was what a boiling brain first threw up to the surface, mere scum, which I never intended to pass for cream. Your distinction as to this gratifies me much, not because it is ingenious, any critic can take an ingenious exception, but because it is just; beyond all, your preference for 'Nepenthe,' an unfinished sketch, to 'Sylvia,' a completed poem, gives me confidence in your judgment. It shows me you have, what is so difficult to meet with, a substantive, self-existent taste for *poetry itself*, when you can thus like storyless abstraction better than a tale of some (though little) human interest—not that the

latter should be unappreciated where it occurs, but it *alone* is usually thought of.

This brings me to your advice about undertaking a subject of both natures, the imaginative and the real. Such indeed always is, always should be, the scope of a truly Catholic poet. But, alas! I fear myself but a poor sectarian. The double mind seems wanting in me; certainly the double experience, for I have none of mankind. My whole life has been an abstraction, such must be my works. I am perhaps, you know, labouring under a visitation much less poetic than that of Milton and Mæonides, but quite as effective, which has made me for life a separatist from society—

> 'From the ways of cheerful men
> Cut off, and for the book of knowledge fair
> Presented with *each other page* a blank,
> And wisdom at one entrance quite shut out.'

Indeed, were my knowledge of humanity less confused than it is, I apprehend myself to be still too much one-minded for the making a proper use of it. Do you not expect so from 'Nepenthe'? Does it not speak a heat of brain mentally Bacchic? I feel a necessity for intoxication (don't be shocked, I am a mere tea-drinker) to write with any enthusiasm and spirit. I must think intensely or not at all. Now, if this be the case, if my mind be only occasional, intermittent, collapsive, which (unaffectedly impartial) I think it is, how should I conduct the *detail* of a story where poetic *furore* were altogether out of place? It is a great defect, I own, but my genius (as you call it) never enables me to sustain a subject, the subject must sustain *it*. I do so despise the pretension to

omniscience and omnipotence now in vogue! This it is that makes us so feeble and shallow; will not the streams run deeper and stronger in one than many channels? But, besides, my health is an indifferent one; a tertian headache consumes more of my life than sleep does, and, worse than this, not only wasting it, but wearing it down. And I have to scribble every second day for means to prolong this detestable headachy life, to criticate and review, committing *literary fratricide*, which is an iron that enters into my soul, and doing what disgusts me, not only with that day, but the remaining one. All these things, and want of confidence still more than they, keep me a long letter-writer at your service. I have neither time nor inclination for aught else. Not but that I can show various first acts, introductory cantos, &c.—could *paper* hell with my good intentions—and have several folios only to be copied out of the parchment of my brain; the like interruptions and misgivings, however, cut them all down to such performances as 'Nepenthe.' Your praise indeed almost touches my lips with fire, and I could begin to utter the flame of song. After having viewed a subject sufficiently, I will dedicate it without fail *to you*, if you will permit, as the resuscitator of 'Sylvia,' and the raiser of my own spirits on earth. But for you, both might as well have been at the bottom of the Dead Sea.

I write at this fearful length because it is the only way, dear Miss Mitford, in which I can ever have unpainful communion with any friend. My impediment is, as it were, a hideous mask upon my mind which not only disfigures, but nearly suffocates it. Yet I

hope we shall meet, for even letters are half unintelligible without the recollections of those who write them. Besides, I wish so much, and with a parent's fondness, to see the *foster-mother* of my 'Sylvia' and 'Nepenthe.' Egotism! egotism! from first to last this letter is all about myself. Another hateful result of a solitary life, it makes me very selfish. Indeed I doubt if it be not the mother of as many vices as Idleness, instead of so much *Wisdom*, and what not, it is said to hatch. Swift, you know, says, 'There are many wretches who retire to solitude only that they may be with the devil in private.' Man is surely a most gregarious animal; we ought all to put our minds together as near as the other beasts do their noses. I say this to show you that my misanthropy is compelled, and that my mind has not *grown hairy* like that of many another anchorite, as well as his body. Your recommendation as to Mr. Chorley has been in part followed. I wrote to him just before leaving London, and sent him your 'Nepenthe.' But, as to making his acquaintance, I could as soon 'eat a crocodile.' However, even this I could do bit by bit, and a new acquaintance of the *man* kind I get down in the same way. He (Mr. Chorley, not the crocodile) wrote me a most kind and encouraging answer. I well believe him all as amiable and intellectual as you represent him; upon my return to town I shall certainly visit him in my *mask*. When I do not know how to subscribe myself with all the warmth yet respect I feel, it is my habit simply to say,

Yours,

GEORGE DARLEY.

MISS MARTINEAU *to* MISS MITFORD.

17, Pludyer Street, Westminster, November 9, 1836.

MY DEAR MISS MITFORD,

I cannot now indulge in writing about Catherine Sedgwick, or any other of my dear American friends. This is the thirty-ninth letter I have written on the subject of the other half sheet since yesterday morning, and I can scarcely hold the pen. We want you to sign this petition. Everybody is signing; and the case is so clear that I think you cannot hesitate. Mrs. Somerville, Miss Aikin, and I are signing. We expect Miss Edgeworth's in a post or two, and all the rest. When we meet, gentlemen and ladies, I will tell you the circumstances which have roused us at this time. We have very strong hopes of success, of obtaining a law this Session, in which case I may have to wish you joy of a good prospect for your purse; and we may congratulate each other on (what we value far more than money) an essential service having been rendered to Science and Literature in both countries. I hope the Sedgwicks will get up petitions to support ours from the U. S. authors. Every true American is as anxious as we are to obtain this law.

No time is to be lost. The petition goes the end of next week. Please sign the printed part and return it by post to Messrs. Saunders and Otley, 50, Conduit Street, Regent Street, London. Whenever you come to town, do let me have the pleasure of seeing you again. It is one of the pleasures I long for.

Ever yours most truly,

HARRIET MARTINEAU.

This letter seems to refer to a movement in favour of international copyright. In June, 1837, Miss Mitford writes to Miss Jephson: 'Have you read Harriet Martineau's "America"? She is a great honour to her sex and country.'

GEORGE DARLEY *to* MISS MITFORD.

27, Upper Eaton St., Pimlico.
December 23, 1836.

I do not mean, dear Miss Mitford, to draw your eyes out with such an endless epistle as my last, written in perfect ignorance of your many anxious engagements, which were made known to me at the usual time of all desirable intelligence—a day too late. Yet I heard how much kind interest you had taken in my letter, so as almost to tempt me into writing you another *pandect*. However, by good luck the many-tongued lady told me to-day you were steeped in tragedy to the very lips, and now that you are supping full with horrors, it will be savage to accumulate much more upon them in the shape of such grim hieroglyphics as mine. The chief object of all these presents is to wish you all the success you merit. May it come in a Sunburst of Glory and a Shower of Gold! A playhouse seems to me as melancholy as a catacomb, but I shall venture my anatomy there to witness your triumph. Laying in embargo on Mr. Forrest seems to have been most judicious; our native performers are salt that has lost its savour, him I have not seen, but am told that he has a new world vigour about him very impressive. Again do I wish you a joyful

rise from that region of damnation where so many spirits have sunk for ever.

I have also to return you with thanks the extracts you sent me, and to tell you I have taken, like a good patient (though with wry face enough), the new acquaintance you prescribed for me. Nothing ever went so much against the stomach of my inclination. I would as soon be ordered mummy. For the reason you know, all strange bodies are distasteful to me. At this one my gorge rose like Hamlet's at the empty cranium. Habits, manners, tastes, opinions, all so opposite. We had often met with the same *congeniality* as a snake and a porcupine. However, I was determined to be obedient, so on the first occasion went up, shook cold hands, and felt all day after as if burnt in the palm for treason against true-heartedness. But to drink the bitter cup of *obedience* to the dregs, I sent him my book as you ordered and stayed away myself, as I was not quite sure you forbade. Will you believe, after all this, that we are now such excellent friends I scarce can think we were ever anything else? He is everything you spoke him, nothing I thought him—clear-headed, sound-hearted, only as much too modern of mind as I am too antiquated, so you see it was no false modesty when I told you my ignorance of the world. Will you accept the volume I send? It is my maiden publication (its predecessor was my *childish* one), so demands all your tenderness to its deficiencies. Do not, I pray you, read the prose, in pity both to yourself and me; some of the verse, I am told, is better than I think it, and the latter too, let me beg in *Parliamentary* phrase, 'to be read this day six months.'

Have you heard from the kind-hearted little Careys? Pray, if you write to them, remember me. I have been miserably ill for a long time, knocking at Death's door, but he had not the charity to take me in. Quite well now, so content to grovel on,

Ever yours, Miss Mitford,
With the greatest esteem and regard,
GEORGE DARLEY.

Miss Mitford says that these epistles of Darley's, written in a quaint, upright hand, 'resembled the choicest parts of the choicest orations,' and were 'startling to receive and terrible to answer.' She was not personally acquainted with him, but inserted one of his poems in Finden's 'Tableaux.' His works, though not without merit, were too enigmatical for the public of the day, and had no sale. He died in London, away from all his relations, an unsuccessful and disappointed man.

LADY DACRE *to* MISS MITFORD.

2, Chesterfield Street, Friday, July 7, 1837.

Of course, dear Miss Mitford, I cannot but feel highly gratified by the honour you mean to do me, and am aware that I must be the gainer by any mode of coupling my name with yours. The 'noble Joanna' dahlia will be the pride of my garden, and if *we* ever *invent* a new flower, as you florists make nothing of doing, I think I must christen it 'The nice little Mitford.' 'Nice,' you know, in the language of the exclusives, means every perfection. The 'poor

old Dacre' you imply a promise of shall be treated with due respect when it arrives. It is droll enough that I have just been reading 'The Lost Dahlia' when I received your letter so much in the same character.

I have intended to thank you for my *nice* book for these three or four days past, but wished to read it first, and have now so nearly done so that I can speak of it. The little stories are all pretty, written with that ease, lightness, liveliness, neatness, and grace which characterize all your writings, and all your pictures are alive. Your landscape-painting is bright and true as the Miss Blakes' sketches made out of doors at *one sitting*, which are invaluable; and, if you have ever seen them, you will not be angry at your works being compared with those *young ladies'*, which at first might startle you. But (here comes my *but*, you see,) I cannot allow you to go on with these slight sketches of Berkshire scenes and Berkshire doings. We must have something of more pith and substance soon from the author of 'Rienzi,' or we shall forget it was you who wrote that very powerful, and beautiful, and successful tragedy. This is a little *stop gap*, I know, and a charming one it is, but I must insist on your putting on the 'sock' soon. The dedication to the excellent Harness is sweet; I particularly like it. I am very glad he prints his play. I am sure it will do him great credit. It is full of beauty, whether suited for the stage or not I have no guess.

Lady Beecher is a charming person, but she has ost so much of her personal beauty that she might

not *charm* on the stage, as she once did; besides, I think the public taste is so corrupted now that the delicacy of her acting would not be felt. You must lay about you, and box their ears to get their attention now-a-days; but *you* can box their ears, as well as soothe and calm down every rougher feeling, as you do in those rambles in your pony-carriage after wild flowers and cottage children in which I have just accompanied you.

And now, dear Miss Mitford, with many thanks for all your kindness to me, which is much more *real* than mine to you,

Believe me, sincerely yours,

B. DACRE.

P.S.—I wish you were of our parties at Mr. Kemble's, and heard him read Shakespeare, and his daughter sing.

The following extract from a letter written by Miss Mitford to Miss Barrett is here printed, to show the state of domestic discomfort in which Miss Mitford and her father were now living:—

MISS MITFORD *to* MISS BARRETT.

Three Mile Cross, December 15, 1837.

MY DEAR LOVE,

I have only a moment in which to thank you most heartily for your very comfortable bulletin, and to beg you to continue to send good news. We are in the agony of moving ourselves and our goods and chattels to a cottage still smaller than this, two doors

off, whilst this house proper is repaired and painted—the two ends which have been taken down and built up again being to be roofed in on Saturday night, which drives the saws and hammers forward to the interior, and we find that in these closets (by courtesy called rooms) the workmen and we cannot co-exist, manage how we will. You may comprehend the capacity of our new mansion when I tell you that we are to pay £2 10*s.* for the quarter. Dash can't abide it; he sticks to me as if stitched to my gown skirts.

Mrs. Hofland writes to me about a young American poet (Mr. Thackeray), who came to England partly to see Miss Edgeworth and myself. Miss E. was very kind to him, but what I shall do about him, in the present state of our house, heaven only knows! Did I tell you that I shall have a pretty upstairs sitting-room, thirteen feet square, with a little ante-room, lined with books, both looking to the garden? I am only grieved at the expense, for though the building is done by our landlady, there must be incidental expenses—carpets, bells, stoves, &c., &c. However, it is less than moving, unless we had gone into Wales, to the house which a dear friend offered.

CHAPTER II.

MISS BARRETT—LETTERS FROM MISS BARRETT, LADY DACRE, THE DUKE OF DEVONSHIRE, MRS. HOWITT, AND JOANNA BAILLIE.

Mr. Kenyon, when taking Miss Mitford in May, 1836, to see the giraffes and the diorama, called for Miss Barrett, 'a hermitess in Gloucester Place,' to whom he was distantly related. This lady's first introduction to the public as a poetess was through the insertion, in 1832, of one of her poems in the 'New Monthly,' then edited by Bulwer, and through Miss Mitford's publishing some of her poems in Finden's 'Tableaux.' Miss Mitford then said, 'The time will come when your verses will have a money value.' Afterwards she writes: 'My love and ambition for you seems like that of a mother for a son.' 'Our sweet Miss Barrett—to think of virtue and genius is to think of her.' 'She is so sweet, and gentle, and pretty, that one looks at her as if she were some bright flower.' 'The fairest and dearest of my contributors to Finden's "Tableaux." If she be spared to the world, you will see her passing all women, and most men, as a narrative and dramatic poet. In her modesty, sweet-

ness, and affectionate warmth of heart, she is by far more wonderful than her writings.' Her health was a constant source of anxiety to her friends. 'She is, I fear, going rapidly to a better world. She is too sweet and gracious, as well as too wise and lovely, to be long spared.' In reference to her writing Miss Mitford says: 'When I first saw her she spoke too well, and her letters were rather too much like the very best books. Now that is gone, the fine thoughts come gushing and sparkling like water from a spring, but flow as naturally as water down a hillside, clear, bright, and sparkling in the sunshine.'

MISS BARRETT *to* MISS MITFORD.

74, Gloucester Place, Monday [1837.]

I cannot hope, my dearest Miss Mitford, that it may have seemed to you half as long as it has seemed to me since I wrote last to you, and yet it is a month since your delightful letter brought the *first* pleasure to me at a season of deep sadness. We had heard from the West Indies of the death of poor papa's only brother, of one in past times more than an uncle to me, and, notwithstanding all the comfort with which God in His mercy did soften this affliction, it could not but be felt, even as the affection which preceded it had been, and must ever be. Dearest Miss Mitford, the passing away of everything around us would break the hearts of many of us, if we did not know and feel that *we* are passing too. I long to hear of you, and should have said so before, and have thought day after day I will write to-morrow, and then again,

not being very well, I have put it off to some less dull moment for your sake. The turning to spring is always trying, I believe, to affections such as mine, and my strength flags a good deal, and the cough very little; but Dr. Chambers speaks so encouragingly of the probable effect of the coming warm weather, that I take courage and his medicines at the same time, and 'to preserve the harmonies,' and satisfy some curiosity, have been reading Garth's 'Dispensary,' a poem very worthy of its subject. Yes, and besides, I have been going through heaps of poets ('oh, the profaned name!') laid up in Dr. Johnson's warehouses—Duke and Smith, and King and Sprat (never christened in Hippocrene), and Pomfret, with his choice, not mine, and his Pindaric odes, not Pindar's, in which he exclaims in a rapture—

> 'Good heaven would be extremely kind,
> Either to strike me dead, or strike me blind,'

when striking him *dumb* would be more to *my mind!* By the way, I am not at all sure of that not being as good a line as either of his.

Thank you for your most interesting remarks upon the drama; Victor Hugo's plays I never read, but will do so. His poems seem to me not very striking, more bare of genius than such of his prose writings, as I have happened to see. And little have I seen of the new school of French literature, and must see and know more of it. De Lamartine's 'Pilgrimage' is the only traveller's book, except 'Sinbad the Sailor,' and 'Robinson Crusoe,' that ever pleased me much; and his poetry is holy and beautiful, though deficient, as it appears to me, in concentration of expression and

grasp of thought. To speak generally, my abstract idea of a Frenchman is the antithesis of a poet, but pray do not, if the prayer does not come too late, think me quite a bigot. There is nothing, as you say, like the Greeks, *our* Greeks let them be for the future, and although I can scarcely consent to crowning Philoctetes over all, it would still be more difficult to take a word away from your just praise. The defect of that play is that it is founded upon physical suffering, and its glory is that from the physical suffering is deduced so much moral pathos and purifying energy. The 'Œdipus' is wonderful, the sublime truth which pierces through it to your soul like a lightening, seems to me to be the humiliating effect of guilt, even when unconsciously incurred. The abasement, the self-abasement, of the proud, high-minded king before the mean, mediocre Creon, not because he is wretched, not because he is blind, but because he is criminal, appears to me a wonderful and most affecting conception. And there is Euripides, with his abandon to the pathetic, and Æschylus who sheds tears like a strong man, and moves you to more because you know that his struggle is to restrain them.

But if the Greeks once begin to be talked of, they will be talked of too much. I should have told you when I wrote last that Mr. Kenyon lent me Mr. Harness's play, which abounds in gentle and tender touches, and not, I think, might I say so, in much concentration and dramatic *power*. As to its being a domestic tragedy, I do not object to it on that account, and really believe that I don't share

your preference for imperial tragedies. Do not passion and suffering pervade Nature? Tragedies are everywhere, are they not? Or, at least, their elements are, or is this the pathos of radicalism? My book is almost decided upon being, and thanks for your kind encouragement, dearest Miss Mitford, you, who are always kind. There is a principal poem, called the 'Seraphim,' which is rather a dramatic lyric than a lyrical drama, and as long, within twenty or thirty lines, as my translation, 'The Prometheus of Æschylus,' and in two parts. I can hardly hope that you will thoroughly like it, but know well that you will try to do so. Other poems, longer or shorter, will make up the volume, not a word of which is yet printed. Would not by E. B. B. stand very well for a name? I have been reading the 'Exile,' from Marion Campbell, with much interest and delight; besides, she made me forget Dr. Chambers, and feel how near you were. A pleasant feeling to everybody, but how very pleasant to your affectionate and grateful

E. B. Barrett.

P.S.—My kind regards to Dr. Mitford, and papa's and my sister's to you. Our house in Wimpole Street is not yet finished, but we hope to see the beginning of April in it. You must not think I am very bad, only not very brisk, and really feeling more comfortable than I did a fortnight since.

LADY DACRE *to* MISS MITFORD.

Kimpton Vicarage, Thursday.

MY DEAR MISS MITFORD,

As soon as I read yours, with inclosure for Miss Fox, I set off to little Holland House with them; we had a long talk, and she was everything we could wish. I now begin to open my heart to hopes that make it thump against my ribs very comfortably. I left town the day after I saw Miss Fox, and return thither on Saturday, when, if I find any possible means of playing the part of the fly on the whirl in the fable, I shall be full as happy and *vainglorious* as that same celebrated fly. I grieve to think of the disappointment you have undergone about 'Otto' and your novel, and the unpleasant consequences in your domestic comfort; you have so many friends, and your works as well as yourself are so much esteemed, that at *romantic* moments I say, 'Oh, yes, we shall succeed,' and then comes my worldly knowledge and knocks over my castles in the air. I wonder whether the Archbishop of Canterbury has any voice in these things? I could propitiate him. Surely it is no joke to have written the finest and most successful tragedy of the age; when I say 'finest,' I mean as an acting play, for experience has proved that. I am not so faithless to my glorious Joanna as to use that expression in an unqualified sense. You would not like me if I did. *Apropos* of that noble creature, I called on her a few days before I left town, and thought both herself and her sister much broken. I have a lovely letter from her to-day; but it is the letter of a lovely spirit about to depart to its native sphere. 'In its weak

virtues wrapped and best prepared,' vide my own translation of a part of Petrarch's '*Trionfo della morte.*' And now, my dear Miss Mitford, I will release you, and hope to have something to say ere long better worth your reading.

Yours very sincerely,

B. DACRE.

P.S.—I have sent my book to Miss Barrett, and have a sweet note from her. I shall try to *niggle* on with her; but I am too deaf and old, I fear, to scrape acquaintance with a young person.

DUKE OF DEVONSHIRE *to* MISS MITFORD.

Chatsworth, May 18, 1837.

DEAR MADAM,

Lord Melbourne's nephew and private secretary, Mr. Cowper, is a very great friend of mine, and I have written to him most fully about you, and he will not fail to show my letter, and to press the subject with Lord Melbourne. But do not let me make you sanguine. I never yet found a minister who would do anything the more for my asking.

How sorry I am to find that you have been annoyed by cares and illness. From the latter few seem to have escaped in this extraordinary winter and spring.

I have the honour to be, dear madam,

Your most sincere humble servant,

DEVONSHIRE.

The preceding letter refers to the movement for obtaining a literary pension for Miss Mitford. It was originally suggested by Mr. Harness, and warmly

forwarded by Lady Dacre, who wrote to Miss Fox on the subject, and thus secured Lord Holland's powerful influence. Accordingly, at the end of May, 1837, Lord Melbourne granted her £100 a year.

MRS. HOWITT *to* MISS MITFORD.

Esher, June 11, 1837.

MY DEAR MISS MITFORD,

Allow me to congratulate you on a subject which has given us unfeigned pleasure, and which we have found stated as fact in the *Athenæum* of yesterday—that you are now to a certain extent beyond the necessity of too far straining and taxing your mind, that the government has done itself the honour of benefiting you. I know no circumstance that could have raised the Whig Ministry, of whom he has no exalted opinion, higher in my husband's estimation than this good act of theirs. Long may you live to enjoy it, and to produce through it the best works you will have written. . . .

Dear Miss Mitford, I cannot conceive how it is that you contrive to do anything in the country. People talk about the seclusion and the quiet of the country being so favourable to literary—successful literary labours. I think not. I sit here in pleasant, sunny rooms with flowers all round me, and birds singing as they sang in Paradise, and for the life of me I cannot write, though I have bound myself to finish a little volume by September, to be called 'Birds and Flowers;' but the truth is, everything is so pleasant that my mind, instead of being concentrated to a task, is all afloat with the outward enjoyment of

things. I must satiate myself with all the abundance of natural objects, before I can sit down to write about them. I remember at Nottingham, in the heart of the town, I used to think of such things, and create a vision of them in my own mind till I could do no other than write about them; here, instead, I go out and look at them. But it is a heavenly life after all, if one had nothing to do but to enjoy it.

You will be glad to know that my husband is just bringing his 'Rural Life' to a conclusion. I expect another fortnight's work will complete it. I am sure you will like it. When you have leisure, let us hear from you. We want to know exactly what you are doing, and when the new volumes will be out.

Will you be so good as to send us an approved recipe for *Pot pourri*, for I am sure you must possess such a one, and Anna Mary is exactly the damsel for the execution of such works.

With kindest regards to your father both from William and myself, and love to you,

I am, dear Miss Mitford,

Yours truly,

M. H.

The application to which the following is a reply seems to have been made at the suggestion of Lady Dacre.

MISS BAILLIE *to* MISS MITFORD.

Hampstead, June 30, 1837.

MY DEAR MISS MITFORD,

It is impossible that I should feel any request of yours at all intrusive, or otherwise than friendly and

kind, and I truly regret that I must on the present occasion deny myself the pleasure of obeying you. Since the age of annuals began (a good many years now) I have always refused to contribute to them—though many of their most eminent editors requested me to do so, and to make my own terms—because I did not like that species of literature.

The circumstance you allude to regarding Lady Dacre and Mr. Harness gave me great satisfaction, though it was not from either the one or the other that I heard of it. Our minister will not suffer in the public opinion from *that* appropriation of the public money, but will gain credit by it, as he ought. We had the pleasure of seeing Lady Dacre yesterday, who kindly came to take leave of us for the season, and brought Lady Beecher (formerly Miss O'Neil) with her, who seems a well-informed, sensible woman, and brought former scenes to my recollection which I now look back upon with pleasure and regret. The last time we had met was in a summer-house in the neighbourhood of Hampstead, when Sir Walter Scott, in one of his pleasanter humours, sat between us.

Lady Dacre told me that Mrs. Sullivan[1] is in the press again with a little book for promoting economy amongst the countrywomen of her neighbourhood; and she could not do them a better service. It is to be privately printed and given away. What an active, public-spirited creature she is!—worthy of her maternal parentage.

I am glad Mrs. Baillie had the pleasure of seeing you when at Mortimer. It was one of the pleasures

[1] Lady Dacre's daughter.

she looked forward to when she left home. She is indeed what you call her—a person of kind actions and gracious words. I am very proud that there should be a geranium in your garden bearing my name. I hope it will flourish there, and continue to be a proof of your kind partiality to

Your sincere and grateful friend,

J. BAILLIE.

MRS. TROLLOPE *to* MISS MITFORD.

Hadley, August 2, 1837.

You, my dear friend, know too well what it is to have to finish a book, much to wonder at, or much to blame, my not attempting to write letters to anyone till my volumes on Austria were finished. These, I am happy to say, are now off my hands. Mr. Bentley has got them, and I am free. Our expedition has been a very pleasant one, even although my dear Tom was carried away from us in the very midst of all our Vienna gaieties in order to take upon himself the office of under-master of King (Edward's?) school at Birmingham. This is an appointment he has been long wishing for, and we were, therefore, too reasonable to grumble *much*, but the losing him was very disagreeable. I heartily wish that you, with your rich, peculiar vein, would visit Austria, and give us some racy sketches of its *happy, happy, happy*—yea, thrice happy peasantry! I have no power to treat such a subject as you would do; but it is a very fine one. There is a sturdy independence, a gay light-heartedness, and thrifty industry in their natures

which seems made up of England, France, and Scotland, taking exactly what is best in each. Of the capital, of which we saw more than a tour generally shows, having passed eight months there, I can only say that it is the very gayest place I ever entered; but, agreeable as it is for a season, I should not like to pass every winter in such a careless round of dissipation. We really found it, as the housemaids say, 'too much for our strengths,' but those to the manner born take it very easily, and, with the restoration of a few weeks of summer interval, pass their whole lives without being for a single evening alone.

The first book I inquired for on my return was 'Miss Mitford's novel,' but I was told no novel had appeared. 'Country Stories,' however, are promised me, and these I expect to enjoy as I did their predecessors before them, for, though conscious of growing old apace, touches, true touches of Nature reach my feelings as quickly as ever. I doubt, however, if I have so much fun in me as heretofore, for I do not laugh at 'Boz' half so perseveringly as most others do, and as I will not put this obtusity down to my want of capacity, I must attribute it to my age. You, my dear friend, who are, as I take it, some half score of years or more my junior, can judge of these popular pleasantries more fairly, and I really wish you would tell me, if you go on number after number sharing the ecstasy that causes thirty thousand of the 'Pickwick Papers' to be sold monthly.

My good friend Mr. Bentley, who, with his charming wife, was with me last week, tells me that Mr. Macready has taken Covent Garden, and that he

(Bentley) is to be acting-manager. This gives hope, I think, of something like a regular drama again, and I hail it joyfully.

I hope your father is quite well. Pray remember me to him, and believe me, my dear Miss Mitford,

Very faithfully yours,

F. TROLLOPE.

P.S.—Are you not rejoiced at our friend Marianne's good fortune? Your £100 ought to have been £300.

MRS. HOWITT *to* MISS MITFORD.

Esher, October 23, 1837.

MY DEAR MISS MITFORD,

With this comes a little book, which, little as it is, will, I hope, find favour in your eyes. You will think I am a most devoted writer of juvenilities, but the truth is one has no satisfaction in writing what publishers will not purchase; thus my poor ballads lie by, and I have busied myself through the latter months of the summer over this little book, and, after all, found it a very pleasant occupation.

We have been quite in an unsettled state through the summer from the intention we had of removing nearer town. We found ourselves here quite too distant from the advantages of London, and William perfectly impatient under the sense that, if he wanted to consult a book in the British Museum, he must drive sixteen miles, or torment himself by mounting a slow stage-coach. He therefore perambulated the entire neighbourhood of London, and all around

friends made a hue and cry after any 'genteel residences,' 'villas,' or 'desirable cottage residences,' as the house agents' books have them—and endless were the places he visited, both likely and unlikely. After all, the conclusion he was compelled to come to was that here we must remain for the winter at least, for not one place did he find that in itself offered half the comforts and conveniences of our own home, spite of the envious fourteen miles. So here we are still, and, as the Southampton railroad will be opened between this and London in the spring, we shall have an opportunity of proving whether, as the learned in these matters tell us, it will offer us all the advantage of a short stage distance.

I hope you will not be tired of hearing of the 'Rural Life of England,' for I think my letters always tell you that it is in progress. You will, however, now see it soon, for every day brings proof-sheets; and Longman's are impatient for its publication in November. William has had Mr. Williams, the wood-engraver, who furnishes twelve cuts for each volume, down here twice to inoculate him with some sense of true country objects. He is a man of a curious mind, not apt in originating ideas, but quick and frequently very happy in working them out when they are suggested. He has, in his happiest designs, worked under William's eye and hand like an obedient child, and has produced some of the very best designs that have appeared in wood since the days of Bewick.

I hope your house alterations are all completed, and that you are enjoying the comfort of them.

With kind regards to your father, and best and most affectionate wishes for yourself,

I am, dear Miss Mitford,

Yours truly,

M. HOWITT.

MISS SEDGWICK *to* MISS MITFORD.

New York, February 9, 1838.

Mrs. Jameson leaves us to-morrow, to our deep and sorrowful regret. Seldom has anyone taken from a foreign shore an affection nearer to that which Nature has made to flow with our blood. Such ties and influences as these do more to bind our countries together than commercial compacts and public treaties. This personal intercourse is constantly increasing, and as there is no barrier of language, as we are of 'one baptism and one faith,' we mingle like children of one family: as we are. I am sure, if you were to see Mrs. Jameson and Robert Macintosh lingering with our family circle till twelve o'clock over a cold partridge and a bottle of champagne, our tastes, sympathies, and associations homogeneous; if you were to hear the shouts of laughter at Macintosh's drollery, and his ineffable chuckle at our stories, you would hardly dream we were born three thousand miles apart. Would that your bright and kindly spirit were among us! I made some sad exclamations last evening in relation to Mrs. Jameson's departure, when my sister said, consolingly, 'Oh, Miss Mitford will be here in the next packet.' A startling sound it was to me, my dear friend, though, I fear, not a prophecy.

But if you will not, or cannot come to see us; if the mountain cannot come to Mahomet, Mahomet, &c. If God continues my life and health, I will go to England in another year. My plan is to go with Kate, to be absent a year, to pass the summer in England, and nine months on the Continent. It is a pleasant dream, at any rate—a most pleasant confidence that I shall see *two friends* in that world of strangers. I have not the common curiosity to see authors as authors. We have the best of them in their books, and an hour or two in their society (grudgingly given) would not suffice to give even a glimpse into their soul, those fountains that have sent forth such full and pleasant streams to us. Besides, I find in the lives of Scott, Mrs. Hemans, &c., &c., *even Charles Lamb*, that we Americans are regarded as bores. Nor have I any ambition to see your great people. Accustomed to a society where we meet *no superiors*, I could take no pleasure, where I was admitted on sufferance. But with this pride, which you may think becomes an Indian as well as an American, I feel a respect and love for England that, I think, would make me throw myself on the ground and kiss the earth that would appear to me written all over with bright immortal names.

But, dear Miss Mitford, I am filling up my letter with myself when I should be thanking you for your last kind, but rather sad letter. I was grieved that you should have had such vexations from my countryman, that in return for all we have received from you, we should send you good, and not evil. I never have seen Forrest. I believe the reputation he acquired in England has not been sustained here.

But I know little of theatrical affairs. Since the Kembles left us I have rarely seen the inside of a theatre. Strange to say, I have not yet seen Mrs. Butler; Kate and I are looking forward to the pleasure of passing next month with her. The resundering of her bonds to England was a shock to her, but her late letters indicate cheerfulness, and as she has at present on hand the engrossing business of conjugal life, she has too much to do with the future to sigh for the past. Your friends, the Theodores, are truly and warmly your friends. My brother is passing a most philosophic winter in the country, and his son is shut up in his law-office in town. His wife is in a fair way to make up last winter's loss, inasmuch as the living can replace the dead. Alas! those places are never filled.

Kate says, 'Give my best love to Miss Mitford, and tell her I shall certainly get you across the water next year.' You know our young people have no modest notion of their go-ahead faculties. We are going to send you a Mr. Leasten, a painter, who has been among our Western tribes of Indians, where no other white man has been, and painted with *fidelity* the Indians, their costumes, occupations, sports, religious observances, views of their villages, homes inside and out, numberless views of their rivers, prairies, &c., &c. He has made an immense collection of costumes, implements, weapons, &c. He is a man of perfect integrity, of the most delightful enthusiasm, and better acquainted than any other man with the history and domestic habits of the Indians. Have you ever heard of Osceola the Seminole chief, to

whom we have been so disgracefully treacherous, who has just died in the prison to which he was betrayed. His portrait alone, with Catlin's description of him, is worth a journey to London. Do not fail to see this pictured history of that passing race.

God bless you, dear Miss Mitford! My respectful remembrances and best wishes to your father, and

Believe me,
Ever truly yours,
C. M. SEDGWICK.

P.S.—If it would be the slightest gratification to Mr. Talfourd, pray tell him that we are delighted here with his 'Life of Charles Lamb,' and feel—what we hardly thought possible—a deeper debt to the author of 'Ion.'

CHAPTER III.

LETTERS FROM MRS. JAMESON AND MISS BARRETT—MR. KENYON—POEM —MRS. OPIE—LETTERS FROM MRS. OPIE, MISS BARRETT, LADY DACRE, AND 'BARRY CORNWALL.'

THE only letter from Mrs. Jameson among Miss Mitford's papers is the following—evidently written soon after her first visit to Three Mile Cross. She seems to have been introduced by Miss Mitford to Miss Barrett. The latter writes:—'I had heard that Mrs. Jameson was pedantic, and I found her as unassuming as a woman need be—both unassuming and natural. The tone of her conversation is rather analytical and critical than spontaneous and impulsive, and for this reason she appeared to me a less charming companion than our friend at Three Mile Cross, who "wears her heart on her sleeve," and shakes out its perfumes at every moment.' On Miss Barrett's marriage Mrs. Jameson accompanied her and Mr. Browning on their wedding tour in Italy.

MRS. JAMESON *to* MISS MITFORD.

Ealing, Saturday.

I must have seemed a thankless wretch, my dear Miss Mitford, but ever since my return home I have been very poorly, and miserable, and good for nothing. My visit to you was fraught with new ideas, and I brought away a most agreeable impression of 'Our Village,' as well as of my kind hostess. Will you not be tempted to pause some day on your way to town, and peep at me in my tiny cell.

Your Œnophera (or Œnephora, which is it?) is in the ground and flourishing apparently—a very pretty memorial of my visit.

I have written to Miss Barrett, expressing the gratitude I felt, without volunteering any uncalled-for, uninvited criticism. Believe me,

Ever truly yours,

ANNA JAMESON.[1]

MISS BARRETT *to* MISS MITFORD.

Torquay, Friday, November 13, 1838.

Whenever I forget to notice any kindness of yours, do believe, my beloved friend, that I have, notwithstanding, marked the date of it with a white stone, and also with a heart *not* of stone . . .

You said 'distribute the seeds as you please,' so,

[1] Mrs. Jameson was unfortunate in her family affairs, and nobly laboured to support her mother and some other relations by her pen. Mrs. Butler (F. Kemble) describes her as having 'red hair, a portly figure, and an expression spirituelle.' L. E. L. said that she was 'one of the few people she quite longed to meet again.'

mindful of 'those of my own household,' I gave Sept and Occy[1] leave to extract a few very carefully for their garden, composed of divers flower-pots and green boxes a-gasping for sun and air from the leads behind our house, and giving the gardeners fair excuse for an occasional coveted colloquy with a great chief gardener in the Regent's Park. Yes, and out of a certain precious packet inscribed (as Arabel described it to me) *from Mr. Wordsworth*, I desired her to reserve some for my very own self, because, you see, if it should please God to permit my return to London, I mean ('pway don't waugh,' as Ibbit says, when she has been saying something irresistibly ridiculous)—I mean to have a garden too—a whole flower-pot to myself—in the window of my particular sitting-room; and then it will be hard indeed if, while the flowers grow from those seeds, thoughts of you and the great poet may not grow from them besides.

Dearest, dearest Miss Mitford, pray never, *never* do tear up any old letter of yours for the sake of sending me a new one. Send old and new together. Postages upon *your* letters never can be thought of, and besides, my correspondents are not like yours, millions in the way of *number*. They in Wimpole Street knew my doxy upon such subjects too well to keep your letters back with the seeds. They did not *dare* to wait even a day for papa's coming, but sent it at once to me, double as it was, and *in* a letter of Arabel's own, making a triple; and those 'discerners of spirits' at the post-office marked it (for all the thick paper) a *single letter*—immortal essence not weighing anything.

[1] Her brothers Septimus and Octavius.

I can tell you a very little of dear Mr. Kenyon. I have heard indirectly from my sister, who had only *heard* of his return to London. His poem in 'Finden' has both power and sweetness, and I have heard it preferred, though without an assent on my own part to such a preference, to his last more elaborate contribution. It is, however, very *stirring* in some parts, and liking it in MS.—in which state he hardly allowed me to see it,—I like it still better now. Is not your 'Aaron's Daughter' much admired? It *ought* to be. There is a half playfulness and half sentiment which touch my fancy just where it lies nearest to my heart, besides the practical *good sense* (perhaps my sin may be to care something less for that) which Mr. Kenyon says 'is always to be found in Miss Mitford's writings, in the very midst of their gracefulness.' Yes, I have seen some kind opinions of my 'Romaunt' in the *Chronicle* and elsewhere. *You* set the kind fashion by overpraising it; and indeed the stiff-necked critics must have caught fresh cold not to be able to bow their necks to receive a tunic from your hands.

May the 'Pilgrim's Rest' as constructed be worthy of the 'Pilgrim's Rest' as composed. There must be a 'meeting of the waters' in their brightness for the accomplishment of that wish.

My beloved father has gone away; he was obliged to go two days ago, and took away with him, I fear, almost as saddened spirits as he left with me. The degree of amendment does not, of course, keep up with the haste of his anxieties. It is not that I am not better, but that he loves me too well; *there* was the cause of his grief in going; and it is not that I

do not think myself better, but that I feel how dearly he loves me; *there* was the cause of my grief in seeing him go. One misses so the presence of such as dearly love us. His tears fell almost as fast as mine did when we parted, but he is coming back soon—perhaps in a fortnight,—so I will not think any more of *them*, but of *that*. I never told him of it, of course, but, when I was last so ill, I used to start out of fragments of dreams, broken from all parts of the universe, with the cry from my own lips, 'Oh, papa, papa!' I could not trace it back to the dream behind, yet there it always was very curiously, and touchingly too, to my own heart, seeming scarcely *of* me, though it came *from* me, at once waking me with, and welcoming me to, the old straight humanities. Well! but I do trust I shall not be ill again in his absence, and that it may not last longer than a fortnight.

Have you seen the 'Book of Beauty'? There is in it a little poem very sweet and touching, the production of Miss Farren, a young lady residing in this place. I do not yet know her personally, but she is a friend of Mr. Landor and Mr. Kenyon, and I have heard from the latter high estimation of her genius—it was the word used,—and accomplishments both literary and musical. She has been very kind in sending me flowers and vegetables, but up to this day I have scarcely been fit for a stranger's visit. May God bless you,

Ever dearest Miss Mitford's

E. B. B.

Mr. Kenyon is frequently mentioned in these pages;

his wife was a kind friend to the Mitfords in their early pecuniary embarrassments. He wrote for magazines, and sent his book, 'The Rhymed Plea,' to Miss Mitford as an introduction. Several poems of his appeared in Lady Blessington's 'Keepsakes' (1841-2-3), and one in Miss Mitford's annual ('Findens') for 1838. But he was principally known as a brilliant conversationalist, a genial host, and patron of literary men. At his house, 39, Devonshire Place, he gave dinners not only sumptuous in themselves, but such as Addison would have approved, who said that he dined best who had the best company. Miss Mitford mentions her having met at his house Daniel Webster, Stanfield, Serjeant Goulbourn, Milman, Browning, Procter, Landor, and Rogers. He was a great friend of Wordsworth. He introduced Miss Mitford to Mr. Fields and Daniel Webster, and also to Miss Barrett. Miss Mitford calls him 'the most admired and courted man in town,' and adds, 'The dinner is made that has Kenyon as a guest.'

The following Anacreontic by Mr. Kenyon is preserved among Miss Mitford's papers in her own handwriting. She says that he caught its sparkle from a glass of champagne, and the stanzas, commenced impromptu, were finished *verre en main.*

CHAMPAGNE ROSE.

Lilies on liquid roses floating,
So floats yon foam on pink champagne;
Would I could join that pleasant boating,
And prove the shining main,
Floating away on wine.

'Trust not,' the greybeards say, 'beware!'
Whose sea-shore is the goblet's brim,
And true it is it drowns old Care,
But what care we for him,
Floating away on wine.

And true it is they part in pain
Who sober cross the Stygian ferry,
But only make the Styx champagne,
And we shall cross right merry,
Floating away on wine.

Old Charon's self shall make him mellow,
And gaily row his bark from shore,
While we and every jovial fellow
Hear undisturbed the oar,
Dipping itself in wine.

Miss Barrett dedicated 'Aurora Leigh' to Mr. Kenyon, and says that her 'Dead Pan' was suggested by his paraphrase of Schiller's poem.

Miss Mitford had read Mrs. Opie's 'Simple Tales' when she was twenty-three years of age, and in 1810 she mentions Miss Edgeworth, Miss Baillie, and Mrs. Opie as 'three such women as have seldom adorned one age and country.' Afterwards Mrs. Opie joined the Society of Friends, and Miss Mitford speaks of her as 'that excellent and ridiculous person—' 'Mrs. Opie is Quakerized all over, and calls Mr. Haydon Friend Benjamin.' But Miss Mitford says she mixed gay society with May meetings, and towards the end of her life she came twenty miles to see Miss Mitford, and was 'one of the nicest and quietest old women possible. She is literally a *friend* to me.'[1]

[1] She was the wife of the celebrated painter who was introduced to the world by 'Peter Pindar.'

MRS. OPIE *to* MISS MITFORD.

Norwich, 11th mo., 28th, 1838.

What can my dear, kind, admirable friend have thought of my ungrateful delay in thanking her for a beautiful gift (which, by-the-by, *malgré elle,* I do not intend to keep, except for a time, and for reasons and feelings *unconquerable*—more of that hereafter).

But, culprit though I seem, I have some excuses to plead; first, absence from home; secondly, confinement to my room when at home, and then the lovely book was too precious and pretty to be turned over; and, thirdly, a still longer confinement, and literally to my sofa or bed, just as I had begun to open and read and admire.

Two days ago, however, I contrived to read the book through, and I found my tale appeared to more advantage than I expected. I marvel much at the admirable skill with which thou hast contrived to extract all that was necessary to conduct the story, and make strong, therefore (as such a thing could be made), what I had made weak. The talent of compression is a great one. The design I wrote to is the best save one in the collection, in my opinion; but I do wonder that such a superior writer as thyself, one who has so high a name, should condescend to write *to* a design *given.* (The other names are comparatively unknown.) Dear friend, it seems to me such a mistake to have tales in verse so unreasonably long, and in measure unfit for tales; and prose tales so *fatally* short—in a tale, story is almost everything—and no story can be really good that is not long

enough to allow of the readers being interested in the fate of the actors. The 'Sœur de la Charité' has evidently been so curtailed that the catastrophe is by no means clear. It can only be understood by tale-writers that the Count was the radical turn of the matter, and, *therefore*, the girl ought not to marry him; but I read it more than once before I made it out. This was not Chorley's fault.

I understand and like thy 'Buccaneer,' and think there are sweet lines and real poetry in the first poem; but the story on once reading I could not understand. I may in the second reading. Indeed thy contributors *none* of them write with thy perspicuity, and, like Mungo in the farce, I say, 'How can me like what me no understand?' But the book is a beautiful book, and, but for the true love and fealty I owe thee, I could not find fault, but I think the task *beneath* thee, and to thee it is waste of time.

I was in hopes that increase of income would have enabled thee to break from publishers' trammels, in which I can't bear to fancy thee; but thou art the best judge of thy own requirings and wishes, and I ask thy excuse humbly for having said what I have done. The head and expression of the frontispiece I think *exquisite*, and the face is, and even the look, like our young Queen. Was it meant to be so?

Thou art quite welcome to keep my *mauvais pas*, as long as it can be useful to thee; how rejoiced I should be to find it had been the means of good to thee in any way!

Many thanks for thy seeds; how proud and pleased I shall be to see them grow and flourish!

Oh! yes, I do love geraniums, and should like to rival thee in them.

This is my second letter to thee. One I wrote some days ago, and burnt it, because I did not like it. *Then* I had read *only* the *three first* articles. They will all be read again. *Thine* I much like, *all* of them.

What an interesting, but queer, unsatisfactory book is 'Charles Lamb's Life and Letters,' by Sergeant Talfourd! How imperfect must that biography be, however well written, in which the writer is *forced* by delicacy and consideration for the feelings of the *living* to *conceal* the *awful marking* event which must have influenced the whole life and character of his hero! Thou art aware, probably, that the sister was insane, and the frequent inmate of a madhouse, but she had lucid intervals, and then returned home. In one of these in Charles Lamb's presence, she, while at dinner, stabbed her mother, and she died on the spot! This *fact* I had *from Coleridge* himself! Nor was there ever a more miserable, wretched pair than this poor brother and sister. I mean a more wretched pair of *innocent* sufferers. But in the life there is no *allusion* to these facts.

It is, however, evident that the poor dear man was not *right* in *his* mind. An affecting *vein* of madness went, I think, through all he wrote and said—but the letters are worth reading.

To-morrow I shall have leave from my surgeon to go down into my drawing-room. I have been in my room near a fortnight with rheumatic inflammation of the knee-joint, which I hurt when three years of age by a fall, and so *that* being my weakest part

(next to my head) cold flies thither, and settles there.

Farewell! I *hear a nay*, and expect callers.

Thy obliged and loving friend. Always greetings to thy papa.

A. OPIE.

The allusion at the commencement of the foregoing letter is to Mrs. Opie's contribution to 'Finden's Tableaux.' Miss Mitford succeeded Mrs. Hall as editor of that fashionable annual. The first volume under her auspices (1838) was dedicated to Lady Dacre, and contained contributions from Mary Howitt, Miss Barrett, and Mr. Kenyon. To the next volume, 1839, Mrs. Opie contributed.

MISS BARRETT *to* MISS MITFORD.

Monday, December 3, 1838.

YOU DEAREST MISS MITFORD,

To-day was the day fixed in my mind for writing to you, even if I had not heard from you yesterday. I thought I would wait one day more, and then write, and in the meantime went on building my Bastille in the air about your unusual silence. And do you know, dearest Miss Mitford, the truth came to me among my fancies. I fancied that some illness, and of one dearest to you, kept you silent. It was such a relief to read the first page of your letter, and such a sad confirmation to turn to the second. Well, the evil has passed now. May the shadow of it be kept from your path for very long. While it is, other shadows will fall lightly, and may be trodden upon

by a light and, some of them, by a very scorning foot.

My scorn, really indignation is too good a word for such a subject, unites itself to yours as closely as all my sympathies do to *you* in regard to every detail of your most interesting letter. I am most astonished. Can 'high-toned' instruments be strung with such cracked wires? That *you* should pay, and *he* '*seem* to pay.' Yes! and seem to be a poet besides!! Upon which there comes into my head a saying of Plato. I had thought before that it ought to come nowhere, albeit Plato's, '*Poets speak nobly, but understand not what they speak.*' I feel sorry. It is disappointing to be thrust aside from our estimation of any person. I have been accustomed to associate certain noblenesses with certain intellectualities. And although I never dared quite to use the words of your prophecy, 'He will be a great poet,' on account of the present want of what you call vividness, and I the power of conception, both of us referring to the same deficiency, the one to the effect, and the other to the cause, yet I did see in him a poet, and expect from him more than *this*.

And you think others capable of *this* besides! Don't let us say so till the experience comes. At any rate, dear Miss Mitford, I am unwilling to base the suspicion upon the ground of literary pursuits, small or great. Human nature is surely a better ground than poetical nature, and may it not be very true that the low opinion you have been led to form of a certain class of minds may have arisen from the circumstance, the accidental circumstance of your

seeing those minds in a closer relation to their vanities and interests than other minds, and also by naturally expecting something better from such minds, and also by necessarily, however unconsciously, comparing what you yourself think and do in similar situations, and that is always generously and nobly. I am afraid that human nature is corrupt everywhere. I hope it is not most so where corruption is most 'without excuse.'

But I am thinking, as I ought and must, more of you, my beloved friend, than of any of those people. I cling to the hope that although Mr. Tilt may be irritated into incivilities towards you, and abominable it is that he should, he is too wise a man to sacrifice his interests to his ill-humour, and lose your editorship of his annual just for the sake of annoying you. But, however it may be, as you think it worth while to put the question (and, while you put it, I do trust you were quite certain what the answer will be) *you may make whatever use of me you please, as long as I am alive, and able to write at all.* I hope, if he, Mr. Tilt, ventured to dismiss *you*, he would pay me the compliment of forgetting my existence altogether, but, whichever way it is, 'foul me fall' as a minstrel, if I serve liege ladye in 'Finden's Tableaux' except your own self, therefore do not wrong my fealty . . .

Of dear Mr. Kenyon I have heard more from you than from anyone since his return. My sister had seen him, and papa was going to see him. I had heard nothing of his doings and enjoyments abroad from either. And so he won't have anything to say to our narrative poetry in Finden? But he is a

heretic, therefore we won't mind. After all, I am *afraid* (since it displeases you) that what I myself delight in most, in narrative poetry, is NOT the *narrative.* Beaumont and Fletcher, strip them to their plots, them your own Beaumont and Fletcher, and you take away their glory. Alfieri is more markedly a poet of *action* than any other poet I can think of, and how he makes you shiver! Mr. Wordsworth told me that he could read him only once.

Is there much 'heresy' in all this? Forgive it, if there be.

Little thinks the bishop, whose right reverend autograph conveys my letter to you, that he is aiding and abetting the intercourse of such very fierce radicals. Indeed the last time I thought of politics, I believe I was a republican, to say nothing of some perilous stuff of 'sectarianism,' which would freeze his ecclesiastical blood to hear of. My uncle and aunt know him very well, and that way came my frank. Were omens busy around him, that he made such great haste and brevity about the name of *your village?* Do observe the direction.

MISS BARRETT *to* MISS MITFORD.

Torquay, January 5, 1839.

YOU DEAREST MISS MITFORD,

I do thank you, my beloved friend, for your kindness in making me a partaker of your gladness. I wish all happiness to both of you—to you and dear Dr. Mitford—gratefully responding to your wishes to me on the occasion of this putting on of Dan Time's

new doublet. They have come true already, for *papa has come.* May mine for you come true as truly —may God keep you both from January to January, and grant that you may have and feel no less occasion to look gladly on each other than we all have to look thankfully up to Him! I *may* send my love and earnest wishes to Dr. Mitford—now may I not?

Papa says that Mr. Kenyon is out, and looking very well, but a letter from my sister tells me that, when she saw him last in Wimpole Street, his spirits did not appear to be as animated as usual, and I don't like hearing Mr. Harness's report of him. It must be that the life he leads will tell at last, and at least, on his *spirits.* Only the unexcitable by nature can be supposed to endure continual external occasions of excitement. As if there were not enough—too much that is exciting *from within.* For my own part, I can't understand the craving for excitement. Mine is for *repose.* My conversion into *quietism* might be attained without much preaching, and, indeed, all my favourite passages in the Holy Scriptures are those which express and promise peace, such as, 'The Lord of peace Himself give you peace always and by all means,' 'My peace I give you, not as the world giveth give I,' and 'He giveth His beloved sleep,' —all such passages. They strike upon the disquieted earth with such a *foreignness* of heavenly music—surely the 'variety,' the *change* is to be unexcited, to find a silence and a calm in the midst of thoughts and feelings given to be too turbulent.

My beloved friend, how very glad must be your gladness to watch, as I trust you are doing, the re-

turn of health to your dear invalid—the dearer for the thought of what 'might have been'—day after day, and to feel in the respect and attachment demonstrated so affectingly around you that there is a sympathy for your gladness as well as your fearing grief. But still I am anxious for you; I am anxious lest your past and present fatigues should prove presently too great for you, and that, when the exultation of joy has subsided, this proving may begin. Do be careful, and do not, at any time you have thirty-six letters to write, write a thirty-seventh to *me*. I am very thankful for the frequent accounts you have sent me, yet if they helped to tire you—oh, don't let me tire you ever, dearest Miss Mitford, pray do not.

And this suggests a termination to my letter.

I must, however, say how sorry and glad papa has been with you through the late changes. The patience and the silence *for your sake*, the love stronger than pain, they are beautiful to hear of, and very touching they must have been to *you*.

Poor L. E. L.! You will have been, as I was, startled and saddened to hear the sudden news. I had a *prophet in my thoughts* about her ever since she went away. It is a fatal climate, and the longest years do not seem to go to the lives of poetesses. Did you know her personally at all?[1]

Good-bye, dearest Miss Mitford. The cream shall be with Dr. Mitford's coffee as soon as possible.

Your ever attached,

ELIZABETH BARRETT.

[1] Miss Mitford says L. E. L. was 'a fine creature thrown away.'

P.S.—I am tolerably well just now, and all the better for the sight of papa. He arrived the day before yesterday, and I must remember him to you, although he is out walking, and cannot authorize me to intrude upon you in that way.

MRS. OPIE *to* MISS MITFORD.

January 24, 1839.

MY DEAR AND EXCELLENT FRIEND,

I felt a strong impulse, that of affectionate sympathy and admiration, to write to thee immediately on receipt of thy last letter, which touched many a responsive chord of filial suffering in my heart, but I forbore because I expected to write to thee soon, in order to acknowledge the receipt of the books. These books did not reach me till this morning, and I hasten to perform the long-desired duty; indeed, before I rose this morning, I was thinking much of thee, and wishing to write to thee, when lo! the welcome parcel appeared, and here I am pen in hand. Besides the interesting *ascent* which I devoured at and with my breakfast, I received a volume of poems, with a very polite note from Mr. Kenyon. I glanced my eye over the book, and was so much pleased with what I saw that I resolved not to acknowledge the receipt, and *thank* him, till I had read it through, as I felt sure that I should be much gratified by the perusal, and could give sincere and heartfelt praise. I delight in that sweet boy's artless narration. It is unique in its manner, and I intend to lend it to the taker of *mauvais pas* and his wife. The bishop amused himself and me the other day at

the palace with fancying himself introduced on the stage, and *Enter, the Bishop of Norwich.* However, of that there never was any fear, and thou mayest certainly use the little story if it suit thee.

Now to a graver subject, thy dear father's illness and danger. Merciful, dear friend, is always the hand that tries us—more graciously merciful that which supports us under trial, and then changes our pain into thankfulness and joy! Long may thy beloved parent be spared to thee, and I believe this prolongation of his life to be not only for his own sake, and on account of the love which thou bearest him, but because the longer he lives the greater opportunity is given to thee to shine as a pattern of filial piety, and to prove a bright example to other children. Filial obedience is not the *marking feature* of the present day, far from it, and I turn from many painful instances of filial *ingratitude* and want of *reverential duty* to contemplate with respectful affection the perfection of filial piety and reverential love in Mary Russell Mitford. I fear that sweet western flower, thy charming bard, will not recover, but while there is life there is hope. I am out, but not able to walk up and downstairs much without my knees grumbling a little, but I have thankfully to acknowledge that my health is perfect. How kind it is in thy friends to be so bountiful to one! but it is for thy sake, and I thank thee as well as them. Oh, that poor L. E. L.! Didst thou know her? When will the *mystery* attending her death be cleared up? Emma Roberts writes me word that she did not destroy herself, but something or some one must have done it; she thinks she

ruptured something in the brain, but how violent must the emotion have been that caused it! Dr. A. T. Thompson declares a chemist said they gave her no prussic acid. On the first of next month her faithful friend Blanchard's memoir is *coming out*. That is a difficult thing to *write* under such circumstances. I met L. E. L. at Mrs. Hall's, and I have always felt an anxious interest in her from the conviction she had strong feelings, not under the only safe control—that of religious principle. Farewell! Thy ever attached, obliged, and loving friend,

A. Opie.

The next letter was written by Lady Dacre shortly after the death of her daughter, Mrs. Sullivan, who was an accomplished person and an authoress.

Lady Dacre *to* Miss Mitford.

The Hoo, February 13, 1839.

My dear Miss Mitford,

Although I am not yet equal to answering the many kind letters of friends who grieve with me, and Lord Dacre, with his usual immeasurable kindness, has hitherto taken all such things off my hands, I *will* thank you *myself* for your very gratifying few lines.

The testimony of such an one as you, both to her talents and private virtues (so eminent in both as you are), is worth having, and, in the midst of my desolation, was a soothing balm. My mother's pride glories in her still, and the very recollections which aggravate my loss alleviate it. I could almost wish so just, and

true, and elegant a testimony to her literary merits could be seen and known by all who knew her. To think how soon every trace of so much merit will be effaced from all but our own minds is painful to poor human vanity, though it ought not to be so, when one knows where her much higher virtues are recorded, and are now receiving their reward.

My head is very much confused, so I will merely dwell on matters of fact, and tell you her deeply affected husband (who had nursed her night and day for many months with unremitting tenderness) was persuaded to come to us yesterday, and we have all the children here. We shall keep them a week, and then I shall go back with them to their melancholy home, Lord D. being obliged to go to London.

I never saw grief like my poor Frederick's, but it is tempered with such deep and heartfelt piety that I do not despair of seeing him one day resigned and cheerful. The dear, good, well-trained children will be a resource and comfort to him. As for me, dear Miss Mitford, I have the best of husbands still left me, whose evening of life I must not darken; and these children also to live for, if I *can*. How I am to do so I can scarcely imagine now, but as it can be but for a very few years, I must think of them, and not of myself. I possessed my treasure forty-two years. Ought I not to be all gratitude? and gratitude does preponderate greatly.

I am a brute for saying nothing of your affliction and its happy removal, but grief is very selfish; I cannot think any loss ever equalled ours, and yet how many blessings have we left!

Thank you, thank you for your letter, and all good attend you. With sincere esteem and regard

Ever yours,
B. DACRE.

Miss Mitford solicited poetical contributions for Finden's 'Tableaux' from the well-known Mr. Procter —'Barry Cornwall':—

B. W. PROCTER *to* MISS MITFORD.

5, Grove End Place, St. John's Wood.
June 13, 1839.

MY DEAR MADAM,

If you will do me the favour to particularize the sort of poem you wish to have for your annual, I will try to find something that may suit it. What is to be illustrated? What is the subject or subjects (supposing one may choose out of several)? And what length is the poem to run? If you have no fixed subjects, what is the general tenor to be—*i.e.*, is it to consist of romance, or what else?

Should I be able to find anything in the shape of rhyme, that, with a little extension or alteration, will do, it shall be at your service; but I am afraid of promising anything, unless I have some raw material by me. I am so out of the habit of scribbling anything but law that rhyme is now more difficult than reason to me. And I have many professional engagements on hand that *must* be attended to, and which will absorb all my hours for some time to come.

But you will, I am sure, be satisfied that, if I *say* I cannot do anything, I am really unable to do any-

thing. On the other hand, if I *can*, you shall have it without further apology.

I have just met (at Mr. Kenyon's) Daniel Webster, the famous American orator. He has a broad, strongly-marked brow, with a dark, deep-set eye that looks full of intelligence and vigour. I do not remember ever to have encountered a man whose looks struck me so much. He is a little cold in his manner (like most of his countrymen in general), but it is not offensive. It is rather a grave self-possession than superciliousness. I did not *hear* much, but with the thermometer at 99° in the shade one cannot take any nice observations.

I hope that your geraniums flourish, and that you are meditating something for the press (I mean after you have completed your annual). My wife begs to be kindly remembered to you.

Believe me to be, dear madam,

Yours very faithfully,

B. W. PROCTER.

Miss Mitford writes: 'Sweet, gentle "Barry Cornwall" mixed with the choicest spirits of London Society.' She says that Procter assumed this pseudonym fearing lest his poetical ventures might injure him in his solicitor's business.

CHAPTER IV.

MISS SEDGWICK'S VISIT TO ENGLAND—LETTERS FROM MISS SEDGWICK, MRS. HOWITT, MRS. HOFLAND, AND MRS. OPIE.

MISS SEDGWICK'S acquaintance with Miss Mitford, which had been commenced and so long carried on by correspondence, was about a year before this time cemented by a visit of the American authoress' brother and nephew, who passed ten days with the Mitfords. In 1839 Miss Sedgwick landed in Portsmouth, and immediately, before going to London, went to call on Miss Mitford at Three Mile Cross. Miss Mitford found her 'a very nice person indeed.' Miss Sedgwick gives the following account of her visit to Miss Mitford :—

June 13, 1839.—I had written to Miss Mitford my intention of passing the evening with her, and as we approached her residence, which is in a small village near Reading, I began to feel a little tremulous about meeting my 'unknown friend.' Captain Hall had made us all merry with anticipating the usual *dénouement* of a mere epistolary acquaintance. Our coachman (who after telling him that we were Americans

had complimented us on speaking English, and 'very good English too,') professed an acquaintance of some twenty years' standing with Miss M., and assured us that she was one of the 'dearest women in England,' and the doctor (her father) an ''earty old boy.'[1] And when he reined his horses up at her door, and she appeared to receive us, he said, 'Now you would not take that little body there for the great author, would you?' and certainly we should have taken her for nothing more than a kindly gentlewoman, who had never gone beyond the narrow sphere of the most refined social life. My foolish misgivings were forgotten in her cordial welcome. Miss M. is truly a 'little body,' and dressed a little quaintly, and as unlike as possible to the faces we have seen of her in the magazines, which all have a broad humour bordering on coarseness. She has a pale gray, soul-lit eye, and hair as white as snow; a wintry sign that has come prematurely upon her, as like signs come upon us, while the year is yet fresh and undecayed. Her voice has a sweet, low tone, and her manner a natural frankness and affectionateness that we have been so long familiar with in their other modes of manifestation that it would have been indeed a disappointment not to have found them.

MISS SEDGWICK *to* MISS MITFORD.

London, July 7, 1839.

MY DEAR MISS MITFORD,

What a pleasure it is now to begin my note to the

[1] Miss Mitford resented this description of her father, and in the next edition Miss Sedgwick substituted 'a fine old gentleman.'

personification of all those qualities I have loved in my unknown friend—to have your image realised.

The evening we had the happiness to pass with you was one of the most interesting of my life, and because I have had so much to say about it, I have as yet said nothing! But you know what London is, and how it devours—and, besides present duties, I have an insatiable home correspondence. This is to justify myself—not to justify you. My dear Miss Mitford, you are so like what I expected, and yet so different, that there is a strange blending of the familiar with the novel. I am sure that we should have many points of sympathy that are not general; for example, I do so hate being considered as an author. My being so was so perfectly accidental, so contrary to my tastes and habits. Whenever a person to whom I am introduced begins with an initiatory sentence about my books, I feel as if cold water were thrown in my face. I have not yet got familiar with my name in print; it always seems to me as if that Miss Sedgwick was quite an individual independent of myself. But how has the wish to prove my resemblance to you led me into this flood of egotism?

Pray excuse my retaining Willis' book so long. It was merely because I had not time to write even a note to you. I send with it a piece of utility, which is entirely unadapted to you, but you may find some one among your humble friends to whom it may be acceptable.

I wish I could tell you how much I have been delighted with your friends Harness and Kenyon—

so alike in essentials, so strongly individualized—Harness has the kindliness of Uncle Toby, and Kenyon the benevolence of Pickwick,[1] and those qualities showing off well in polished and intellectual life. I have much to say to you of London. It has afforded me infinite amusement. I am ashamed to send you this, but you will forgive it. Present my respects to your dear father, my homage to the geraniums, and pray keep my love to yourself.

Yours truly,
C. SEDGWICK.

MRS. HOWITT *to* MISS MITFORD.

Esher, January 8, 1840.

MY DEAR MISS MITFORD,

I was quite in hopes that before I wrote to you I should have had the pleasure of making acquaintance with your warm-hearted friend, Mrs. Price, to whom, through you, we are indebted for a charming letter and most opportune present of German books. I do not know when anything gave me more pleasure than the coming in of those books. It really was like a little bit of enchantment, for they came at the very moment when we were saying 'We have read all our books, what shall we do for something new and easy to read?' We have to thank you also for putting us in the way of another acquaint-

[1] Miss Mitford alludes to this observation in a letter to Mr. Harness, 'Certainly the Pickwick countenance as given in the prints is like our dear friend; but he is, with all his kindness, a great deal too shrewd and clever for that very benevolent and rather simple personage.'

ance, which to my feeling promises very agreeably—I mean Mr. Martin. We have a perfect vision of what he is like, for his letters are very characteristic. He is, besides, one of those fortunate mortals—we all know a few such—who, place them where you will under the most unpromising circumstances, and among people who seem made of the commonest clay, yet will they make an Eden for themselves, and bring out, by a sort of alchemy of their own, the pure gold of human nature. How else could Mr. Martin have found what he did in the out-of-the-world regions about Heanor, old Acre Lane, and Langley Mill, high-minded men and accomplished women! I am sure we shall like Mr. Martin, although the immediate object of his mission, the editing the life of his *ancient friend, Mr. Frost*, we cannot undertake in our own person, for this simple reason, that we are so full of literary engagements for the next two or three years as to render it impossible. Nevertheless William will do his best to put Mr. Martin in a way of having it done, by endeavours to suggest some other person. It is rather curious that William has been solicited by a publisher to write 'The History of Reform,'—a noble work—and he has already about a hundred volumes in the house sent to him for that purpose; but it must stand over, at least, till our return from Germany, although it is a work greatly to his taste. I expect, however, before we leave England, he will have to spend about two months in Northumberland and Durham, which is to form the subject of the second volume of the 'Remarkable Places.'

I have just got your Finden's 'Tableaux.' I have

not yet had time to read your articles, nor even Miss Barrett's, but I have looked it through. Is it not a glorious book? We are so delighted with poor Mr. Brown's designs. We know something of him, and feel much interested for him. Poor man! he is doomed, we fear, to die of consumption, but his imagination is so pure, so poetical—is it not? We want to employ him to illustrate my ballad poetry, but I fear his health. I think, however, if he were able to undertake it, he would produce something very good and striking, for his genius has a bent that way.

God bless you, dear Miss Mitford, and send you health and all prosperity. We all send our love.

Yours affectionately,

MARY HOWITT.

MRS. HOFLAND *to* MISS MITFORD.

Broadway, Hammersmith, [1840].

MY DEAR FRIEND,

It strikes me that you and I are much too genteel to use this villainous cheap postage, therefore we cannot correspond as we want—in truth, not a day goes over my head without saying that I am going to write to dear Miss Mitford, and that I want to know exactly what she is doing, still it does not get done—there are so many letters to answer which must be done. What can one do, when everything says you grow old?

Yesterday, for the first time, I saw your beautiful book at Mr. Hoole's, and was delighted to see half the things were your own. I am going there next

week, and shall read them all; one cannot borrow one of those books to be easy about them. Miss Brabazon told me some time since that the doctor was suffering from a bad arm, but it was getting better; but I have once more been in London a few days, and had the very great pleasure of seeing Mr. Harness and his sweet sister, who is quite as young as she was a dozen years since, and actually prettier. There was also a lovely niece, as like her uncle thirty years ago as possible. What was best of all, they seemed glad to see me, and that is a great treat to an old woman, who so seldom peeps into the world that she fears to meet its face, which might reproach her for living so long.

My master enjoys everything in Italy with wonderful zest, and though he says he has undertaken too much for his time of life, and is very old-gentlemanish, he has done more work than ever he did before, since he got over a sense of depression arising from the extreme beauty of the scenes and his own inadequacy to represent them. When he left Naples, he had made thirty finished sketches. With Rome he is quite charmed—'it is so quiet and clean'—but does not sketch there. Since he went, his publisher of the 'Fishing Book' was bankrupt, but the business is continued, and I hope he will not lose much, but it was a great shock to me at first.

Mr. Harness says you are going to publish your own letters, which will, I am certain, be a very charming volume (to be interspersed by those of Sir William Elford). I have many beautiful letters of yours, which might be worked in with others, if you ran

short, and addressed to anyone. They were written from 1817—1824, when you had more leisure for scribbling freely than you have had since, and were not trammelled by the business of literature. You will see how you go on. I esteem your beautiful letters far too much to waste them, even on you; so I shall not send any of them till you say they will be *useful.* I mention it because you may not recollect you wrote such clever letters to so humble a friend as I.

My own peculiar and out-of-the-way disappointments as to an historical novel I cannot tell you, for my wounds are too green. I meant it for my last—it will be last, and best, but never seen.

Mr. and Mrs. Hall, they tell me, are gone to Ireland to make a book between them to suit Creswick's plates. It is seldom that I hear of any literary news, yet I have one very nice neighbour, who sends me books, but can seldom call, being editor of the *Naval and Military Gazette*—and there are some pleasant families, who are kind and call on me, but I do not like living alone at all. I have no desire for what is called company—in fact I dislike it, but I must have somebody to speak to, otherwise I sit and think on all I have loved and lost, and the sorrows of my whole life walk in procession before me. A single person not rich enough to receive friends, should board in a family.

How dreadfully gardens were cut up last winter! How does yours fare? The season has been admirable. I never knew such a fine April. Will you

ever come to London, I wonder; but, if you do, the great folks will devour you, and I shall not get a morsel. There is only one Reading coach that goes through Hammersmith. What a change railways have made! Only two mails go through, and there were nine two years ago. People actually go to Sheffield in eight hours. A friend the other day lunched at one in his own house, and took tea in town at half-past ten, quite settled.

Now do, my dear friend, tell me how you are, for I do want to know sadly, and all about you, and your dear father, to whom offer my best regards, and believe me most truly,

Your affectionate friend,

B. HOFLAND.

MRS. OPIE *to* MISS MITFORD.

Norwich, August 7, 1840.

MY VERY DEAR FRIEND,

On my return from London three days ago I found thy kind letter, and was truly gratified to receive such a proof of thy confidence not only in my *will*, but my *capability* of serving thee; and had I followed the impulse of my *heart*, disregarding the monitions of my judgment and my sense of honour, I should have written directly to say I would, to *oblige thee* (and on no *other condition*), undertake the task so flatteringly assigned me. But I forbear to give way to my *impulses*, and now, after much serious consideration, I am forced to refuse thy request. Now, to tell my reasons, I am in the first place bound in a

degree not to *invent* a story, because when I became a Friend it was required of me not to do so. The tale I sent to Tait was *all* invention, but that was written *before* I joined the Society, and was read, and its publication sanctioned in an *annual* which never appeared, and the person for whom it was written became a bankrupt, and returned it to me. He gave me twenty-five guineas for it. Having it by me, and knowing it to have been approved by a preacher in our Society, I ventured to sell it to Tait. But perhaps I could have found something, half true and half false, which might have suited the *drawing*, therefore *that* Quaker scruple is not my reason for refusing.

This is it. I have *faithfully promised* to give my whole mind to drawing up, if *I am able*, a sort of *popular précis* of the glorious anti-slavery proceedings and sittings in the Anti-slavery Convention, 'The World's Convocation,' recently held at 'Freemasons' Tavern,' where I was daily a delighted auditor; and some of my own Society, distinguished members of that convention, entreated me to *try at least* to draw up something for the committee to publish. I do not believe myself sufficiently *able* in mind and talent to do it, *but* I feel *bound to try;* and I have also a promise, unfulfilled as yet, to Tait to give him 'Recollections' of Lafayette or of Cuvier. The *latter* I may defer, the *former* I *cannot;* and this *very* day I *re-read* Harriet Martineau's masterly 'Martyr Age of America,' to stimulate me to begin my task. This is the truth, and, as I know thee to be *a just person*, I feel that thou wilt see that I am only acting a *just* part in declining to accede to thy wishes.

It is almost post-time—I must conclude. I hope and trust thy dear father will suffer no more from his accident, and that you will have a pleasant autumn together. Thine in love and haste,

A. OPIE.

Pray write.

CHAPTER V.

LETTERS FROM MISS MITFORD TO MISS BARRETT—DESCRIPTION OF SILCHESTER—DECLINE OF DR. MITFORD—LETTERS FROM MRS. TROLLOPE AND MISS SEDGWICK.

THE following letters to Miss Barrett were written in 1842, the year in which Dr. Mitford died, and it has been thought desirable to print them here, as they have not been previously published, and afford good specimens of Miss Mitford's writing, as well as proofs of her devotion to her father during his last illness.

MISS MITFORD *to* MISS BARRETT.

Three Mile Cross, May 5, 1842.

Mr. Kenyon's kind letter, my beloved love, arrived just soon enough to be answered—that is to say, to have a very long postscript appended to a very brief letter. Some friends of his have come to Silchester, and I shall go to see them to-morrow or next day. Oh, that you could be of the party! Well, in spite of the manner in which the winds have affected *that*

dear heart,[1] I will hope that the hour may come when we shall see that lovely scene together. The poem on Silchester first made Mr. Kenyon and me friends, and that friendship was the remote cause of one to me still more precious—there is one reason for loving Silchester. But the scene is itself so beautiful! Fancy a hundred acres of the highest land in the south of England, the crown of a ridge of hills, mostly covered with the richest woodland, enclosed by a wall some twenty feet high, and nearly twenty feet thick, surmounted by huge pollards, high timber-trees, hedgerow shrubs (such, for instance, as fine old thorns, maple-bushes, &c.), with enormous masses of ivy, and wild service trees, and long, pendent shoots of the briar-rose hanging down the old grey, cliff-like walls. Everywhere the ground at the foot of these walls sinks down into a narrow fosse at the depth of some hundred feet, rising again on the opposite side—some part of this outer ditch being rich meadow-land—other portions in the most beautiful coppice—joining again to the other copses—on the most beautiful ascents and declivities. Nothing was ever so exquisitely mantled about. Just at one of the gates of the old city, a huge crag clothed with ivy and crowned with magnificent timber-trees, stands the pretty country church; adjoining to that an old rustic farm-house; and at a little distance, in a magnificent grove of oak-trees, the amphitheatre, with its five rows of seats still to be traced—huge elms growing on the top and sides, and the large oval space in the bottom per-

[1] These words are inserted conjecturally, the writing being somewhat indistinct.

fectly clear, a fine level arena of smooth and verdant turf. On one side of the amphitheatre is a piece of water, dark as a mirror; another deep pool reflects the hoary walls and some noble oak-trees; and on the opposite side of the city the parsonage, a beautiful house, very large for a pastoral mansion, with its pretty grounds, sweeps away into the woodland scenery of the south side of the walls. A short avenue leads to the fine, open, breezy common, golden with furze and broom, and from that commodious upland you look down upon the hundreds, ay, thousands, of acres of the most wild and exquisite sylvan scenery. Pamber Forest is spread beneath your feet; on one side the dark fir-plantations of Mortimer Common rise over a clear little lake with its decoy and its millions of wildfowl—on the other, High Clere; the Beacon hills stretch away over the wild district of North Hampshire, where Mr. Chute's curious old place The Vine (*vide* Horace Walpole), and the still more remarkable moated grange of Bear carry back the eye and the fancy to the days of Clarissa, and of manners and scenery more primitive still. Oh, how I should love to stand with you upon Silchester Common! Its floral beauty I have endeavoured to describe to you in my scrawl of last night—but the purity of the air, the fragrance of the budding woods, the enormous fir-plantations, the wide expanse of richly-scented, blossomed gorse, the acres of wild hyacinth and of lilies of the valley, defy all description. It must be felt. Oh, that we were there together! I so love Silchester—always loved it. Always a drive to Sil-

chester, or ramble through the woods, was to me joy and delight, health, freedom, and happiness; and since I have learnt to think of it as a link in the chain of our friendship, I have loved it more and more. Surely a wish so ardent will one day realise itself. We shall stand together in that lily coppice, where terrace hangs over terrace crossed with its thousand trees, carpeted with its myriad flowers, vocal with the blackbird and the nightingale. Surely, surely, we shall some day go together to Silchester. You will think, my dearest, that I rave. But so well do all here know my passion for the place, that, when very ill, my poor father years ago has often said, 'We will go to-morrow to Silchester,' and that was a never-failing specific. Even now *he* goes there. It is a strange feeling that—for he himself has not my enthusiasm for the spots, and *now* thinks, persuades himself that it tires me, but it is a sort of imitation. He recollects my love for it, my persuasion of the good that it did always effect upon me (the benefit resulting partly from the delicious purity of the air, partly from the love), and now without the love, he, from pure imitation, persuades himself that what used to be good for me will be good for him, so (although too far, as I fairly tell him) he goes.

You are far too good, my most dearest, in what you say of my poor letters. They come from my heart, and therefore go to yours—but that is all their merit—merit to us only—to the lover and the loved. Was there enough of the honey to taste? It seemed so light that it might be all but empty. From two

other 'tastes' of the same 'honouring gift' (and who should have it, if not you?) it seemed to me strongly myrtle-flavoured—tasting exactly like the scent of a bruised myrtle leaf. The most delicious honey that I ever met with came from the orange groves of Sicily, and had the exact flavour of that delicious perfume. Would the myrtle taste keep away the flies, or was it an exaggeration?

Upon reading over my wretched scrawl I see that, with my usual curious infelicity, I have contrived to make it appear that the one hundred acres within the walls of Silchester are partly woodland—whereas *they* are clear, open fields. It is the hills and declivities around that seem hewn out of some vast forest. One sweet village close by (Mortimer West End) goes straggling down one steep hill and up another—partly coppice, partly meadow, partly field—a clear bubbling brook crossing the road at the bottom, and the road itself winding and twisting, so as to give it at every step a fresh landscape. Oh, the beautiful cottages of that West End! In many of them piles of long, straight poles, and neatly arranged staves are leaning against the ends of the dwellings, giving token of the sylvan trade of the inhabitants! But for the distance from Mr. May, I should long since have coaxed my father into migrating as far towards Silchester as Mortimer End West. Only how K—— would dispense with the streets and shops of Reading I can't tell. She is most thankful for your kind and condescending notice of her sister, who lives as lady's maid with the Misses Pepys—Sir William Pepys' sisters—in Bryanston Square. I have

a good opinion of their sense, for I find that they leave their town house in May (not letting it, but shutting it up), and resort to their country seat to stay the fine season in the pretty scenery of Kent.

Did you find the leaf of the *humea elegans* between two leaves of Sir William's book? Did you like the scent? It is the fashion, and the plant came to me from Strathfieldsaye; the gardener there and I having a traffic in flowers. In days of yore I used to get books from the Strathfieldsaye library—Lord Rivers and my father being great friends and fellow coursers. He was a man of taste, and from him I borrowed more volumes than I can recollect of French memoirs. They are delightfully amusing. I must go over them again when I have time, not from Strathfieldsaye, I doubt if the great Duke's library be half as well furnished as was that of his predecessor, who had a noble collection of the best books—but from Sir Henry Russell, whose wife, a Frenchwoman, has caused her accomplished husband to add the literature of her native country to his own.

Heaven bless you! I am tired to death, and I presume that my sleepy letter bears sufficient marks of my condition—thrice happy if it may come in aid of opium, and bring sleep to your eyelids.

. . . . . .

Once again heaven bless you, my most dearest! My father sends his kindest love.

Your faithful,

M. R. MITFORD.

P.S.—How is your Flushie? Mine becomes every day more and more beautiful, and more and more endearing. His little daughter Rose is the very moral of him, and another daughter (a puppy of four months old, your Flushie's half-sister) is so much admired in Reading that she has already been stolen four times—a tribute to her merit which might be dispensed with—and her master, having upon every occasion offered ten pounds reward, it seems likely enough that she will be stolen four times more. They are a beautiful race, and that is the truth of it.

The commencement of the next, also written from Three Mile Cross, is wanting.

MISS MITFORD *to* MISS BARRETT.

. . . . . At last it occurred to me that the best for him would be to move the large articles of furniture with which our entrance-hall is filled, and restore the little parlour to its office of a sitting-room for him, put up my dear father's bed in the hall, condemning both the front door and the one from the staircase, leaving none but that from the parlour and that from the kitchen, and going in and out myself from our back door. This has been accomplished, thank God, without disturbing him. A bed is put up in the kitchen for his nurse. I shall sit up when needful in the parlour, and the large fires of the parlour and kitchen, and the double doors and double carpets with which we have lined the hall, make that a most warm and comfortable bed-room. Heaven be praised! Now he can have his two favourite arm-chairs in the

little parlour, and be moved from one to the other as he gets cramped, and Flush and I can sit at his feet. Poor Flush! how he has been watching the operations, and how thoroughly he approves them! I wish you could see him. Mr. May will be delighted to find that, besides a comfortable bed-room, we have got a nice little parlour for him—change is so essential. Now he can get up as early as he likes, and stay up as long; and instead of the stove which Mr. May suggested for the hall, he will have the nice open grate which he likes so well, and his favourite round table, and his own two chairs.

I cannot tell you the relief that this is to us all. I have been so worried, besides the anxiety and the grief and the fatigue, that this one relief is an unspeakable blessing. It seemed so hard that the discomfort of moving up and down our cottage stairs should be added to such feebleness. Now he will at least have no outward want of room or appliances; and as to visitors being forced to come in at the back door, and pass through the kitchen, why, friends will not mind it, and acquaintances I should not dream of letting in.

I do not apologize for sending you this detail, my beloved friend; you will sympathize with me, I know, and this lodging my father has been a most serious matter to me. Ever since his dear master has been so ill, poor little Flush has either slept at his door—across the door—or in my room, which he never used to do. It seems as if he could not bear to leave us, and there is a look of pity in his sweet countenance, a fellow-feeling which I cannot describe. The gen-

tleness with which he kisses his master's hand now is quite charming.

Poor K. is very good to me—indeed, I must say that everybody feels strongly and rightly towards my dear father. They are kind to me in a great measure for his sake. Poor as he has lately been, he has done so much good—good that mere money could not do—by uncompromising, unflinching justice. Whoever was oppressed had a friend—whoever sought aid in any proper object had a zealous, hearty advocate. Be sure, my beloved friend, that when I say a country gentleman's life is one of wide-spreading usefulness, I speak of what I know. There is not a poor person within ten miles who does not bless my dear father—ay, and many not poor, who sought advice, and a helping hand, and a voice never silent, when it could promote the welfare, or the prosperity, or the harmless pleasure of others. Forgive me when I say this; but why should I not? All the authorship in the world would never win the love and respect that awaits upon a character so firm in the right and so full of active goodwill towards his kind. God bless him! Even in his own extreme feebleness he neither forgets those whom he could help (his last relapse was brought on by an attempt to go to the Bench last Saturday to serve a neighbour, and although forced to return without alighting, he accomplished his object by sending for his brother magistrates to the door), nor his gratitude towards those who are so good to me. Even to-night he spoke to me of 'dear Miss Barrett.' Once again, beloved friend, I do not ask you to forgive

this—I should not love you as I do if I could doubt your sympathy.

MISS MITFORD *to* MISS BARRETT.

Three Mile Cross, Monday night,
September 17, 1842.

MY DEAREST,

Yesterday I had a curious letter from a dear friend now at Dresden, Mrs. H. Westmacott, whose husband is brother of the professor of sculpture, and himself a sculptor of no mean rank. They are there for the purpose of educating their children; and she (a very clever woman) writes, that since the beginning of March not a drop of rain has fallen, that the drought is unparalleled in the memory of man, the fields looking like portions of the desert, the highways like roads of rock-work, the burning sky without a cloud, the light wind scorching like fire, the nights without dew, the trees without a leaf, the crops of turnip and beet devoured by field-mice, who swarm like the locusts of Egypt, the cabbages destroyed by caterpillars, the watermills stopped (and there are no windmills in that part of Germany), navigation long at a stand, and horsemen riding through the Elbe, sheep and cattle fed with chopped straw, or killed for a hundredth part of their original cost, provisions of all kinds more than doubled, washing, bleaching, scouring of every sort prohibited, and water sold at a penny a quart in the streets. Mrs. Westmacott is a very clever woman; and her letter, as graphic and truthful as a bit of De Foe, really touches one to read. I hate heat and drought—really preferring

rain and cold—and have not ceased since the arrival of her letter to thank God for living in our temperate climate.

Mr. May says that my father is better, if he would but think so. But *that* he is so far from doing, that to-day he refused any dinner, and, having risen at twelve o'clock, went to bed at two, so that we have been compelled to feed him with fruit, and brandy-and-water, and rich cake, sopped through one of those cups with covers to them, constructed for the bed-ridden, and I am now writing at his bed-side; when he would be so much better up! And he ought to get out to-morrow; but of that I have small hope. Every day, and twenty times a day, he says that he shall die before the sun rises again, that he shall never see me again, and so forth. I am sure that, in different forms, he repeats this a hundred times in the twenty-four hours; he says it much oftener than everything else put together. The strange thing is, that the effect upon me never changes; I hear it always with the same shock, and the power of saddening and depression which such words possess rather increases than diminishes with repetition. This is, of course, great weakness in me—a great proof of the nervousness which such unvaried anxiety and fatigue have induced. Nothing keeps me alive but air—my evening walk up the hill and through the trees (an avenue of splendid oaks three quarters of a mile long), then down another turfy hill, to an open grove of oak on one side, on the other a patch of varied groups of tall trees and underwood, hawthorn, wild rose, and holly; the holly rising into the forest trees, and yet

fencing round the different clumps, so various in size and shape, with a short, uniform hedge about three feet high, most peculiar in its effect and most beautiful. Several artists to whom I have shown it say that they never before saw the holly assume such a character—two characters united so singularly—full twenty of these patches of oak, beech, and elm rising out of the turf being filled to the very bottom with hoary hawthorn, tall holly, and pendent bramble and briar, while this hedge of holly, uniform as box in a garden, surrounds every clump. Fancy how beautiful these patches of woodland—all diversified in size and shape, rising from fine green turf, and divided by a road from an open grove—stand, with a distance of small enclosures, some arable, some water meadow; and imagine the comfort I find in the absolute solitude, the repose, the silence of such a walk!

Some of my neighbours (kind people in the main) are unreasonable enough to expect that my one hour of liberty should be spent in calling upon them; but that is out of the question. Even for Mrs. Niven I could not make that sacrifice. That one walk keeps me alive. To-night it was much troubled; Flush found a hare, and quested it for two miles. I heard him the whole time, and could follow by the ear every step that they took, and called in desperate fear, lest some keeper should kill my pet. (To be sure, as Ben and my father said when I returned and told my fright, 'Flush is too well known for that.') But you can comprehend my alarm at finding that, the more I called, the more Flushie would not come; whilst he was making the welkin ring with a tongue

unrivalled amongst all the spaniels that ever followed game. Instead of pitying me, both my father and Ben were charmed at the adventure. The most provoking part of it was that when, after following the hare to a copse on the other side of the avenue, he had at length come back to me, he actually, upon crossing the scent again, as we were returning homeward, retraced his steps and followed the game back to cover again. This, which was the most trying circumstance of all to me, was exactly what, as proving the fineness of his nose, Ben and his master gloried in. Indeed Ben caught him up in his arms, and declared that he would back him against any spaniel in England for all that he was worth in the world. So, I suppose, to-morrow he'll run away again!

MRS. TROLLOPE *to* MISS MITFORD.

Carlton Hill, Penrith, December 16, 1842.

I have this moment heard from my brother, my dearest Miss Mitford, of the death of your beloved father. I well know how devoted was your attachment to him, and most truly feel for the sorrow this event will cause you. But the same sweet and loving nature that bound you so faithfully to him through life will teach you to find lasting consolation from remembering how peaceful was his end, and will also enable you to find pleasure and comfort from the attachment of a host of friends, who will all be ready to claim a share of you now that you will be no longer absorbed by one dear object at home. I feel very grateful for your remembering me at such a moment, and I do entreat you to believe that, though

my poor, worn-out stump of a pen has well-nigh lost the power of writing letters, my heart and affections are by no means in the same dilapidated condition, and that I venture to look forward to some bright future summer when you will come and see me, and my lakes, and my grand-children, and my son Tom, and my pretty cottage, and, though last, not least, your old acquaintance Wordsworth. God bless you, dear friend, and believe me,

Very affectionately yours,

F. TROLLOPE.

MISS SEDGWICK *to* MISS MITFORD.

Boston, June 29, 1843.

MY DEAR MISS MITFORD,

I should long ago have written to you, but that repeated domestic sorrows left me little cheerfulness to communicate to others, and for the last year my eyes have been in a condition to preclude all use of them not necessary. They are now better, and improving, and I, who thought time and sorrow had worn out the hopefulness of my nature, begin to look with some faint expectation to a better state of things. Now, my dear Miss Mitford, that your long trial is past, I trust that rest, and the natural elasticity of your spirit, and the most blessed consciousness of your filial fidelity, and, above all, your religious trust, have restored your tranquillity. More than that, in the autumn of our life, neither nature, philosophy, nor religion can help us to, and thank God that cannot be taken long from a mind firmly fixed in faith. I know not what saves those who are without religious trust

from a madhouse or utter prostration when those they lean upon here are torn from them.

I am rejoiced to learn, through our friend Mr. Kenyon and others, that your harassing pecuniary anxieties are relieved, and that your honourable spirit has been gratified by the complete satisfaction of obligations contracted to alleviate your father's sufferings. Theodore Sedgwick entered with myself most cordially into a project to express the sympathy of your friends on this side the Atlantic. We were glad to have it prevented by the only circumstance that should prevent it, the generous and sufficient testimony of those who are your natural protectors and friends. May their sun shine upon you to the last!

I believe I have never given you an account of the product of the geranium seeds which you so kindly sent to me. I shared them with my friend Mr. Downing, who is a horticulturist by profession, a gentleman who has written some charming books on landscape gardening and rural architecture. He showed me with pride his Mitfords, as he calls them. No one could more highly estimate the parentage of the plants, or more surely continue and improve the race. I, in my humble way too, and in spite of my absences and our cold northern airs, have still some beautiful memorials of you, which I trust will long maintain, fresh and odorous, a visible relationship between the Berkshire of the old world and the new.

You may remember my blooming niece, Kate; she is married and settled in Boston, and I am here to take her to Berkshire with me, being too far gone in

my second childhood to be able to face our old home without her. Your friend Theodore has been sadly afflicted by the death of a second and only boy—a magnificent little fellow, who looked as little like death, during his short life, as an Infant Hercules,—and yet, as his mother, whose prophetic love had never been quieted, had predicted, he died at the moment he attained the age at which his brother had been taken. They have two bright girls, and Theodore bears with admirable resolution these repeated disappointments.

My dear Miss Mitford, it will give me true pleasure to hear of any good that befalls you, and I am sure no evil can happen to you without its shadow falling on me.

Yours affectionately,
A. M. SEDGWICK.

CHAPTER VI.

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH OF STACKALL, BY THE REV. W. LYNN—LETTERS FROM MRS. HOWITT, SERGEANT TALFOURD, ALEXANDER DYCE, MRS. CLIVE, MRS. TROLLOPE, AND CRABBE ROBINSON.

REV. W. LYNN *to* MISS MITFORD.

King's Bromley, Lichfield, August 8, 1845.

MY DEAR MADAM,

Having received the answer which I required, I shall now be happy to tell you all I know about my interesting friend and late parishioner, Thomas Stackall.

It was not until I was about to leave Cledbury Mortimer, where I resided two years, that I even heard of Stackall's poetical talents, and only then by chance. I was the more surprised at his secrecy on this point, because on so many other subjects he had been most frank and communicative with me, but on this I soon found that he was exceedingly diffident. However, when he saw that concealment was no longer possible, he at once gave me a full account of all his poetical rambles. From the conversations which I then had with him, and from the letters

which he has since written to me, I am enabled to give you the following account :—

Thomas Stackall was born January 7th, 1807, at Kinfare, near Stourbridge, in the county of Stafford; his parents were among the poorer classes, and his education was humble in proportion, being only such as is usually given in a village school to the children of the poor; nor after twelve does he seem to have had any regular school instruction, indeed he describes himself as being entirely left to his own desires from twelve to fifteen, without employment or restraint of any kind. We shall now see how these three years were spent. They might have proved disastrous to him, for none are in such danger as the *idle;* but God preserved him. He was winding a cord round the youth's heart which gently held him from evil, and from corrupting companions; and this cord was the love of the solemn, the beautiful, and the innocent in Nature. Much of his time during this period he says he passed in lonely woods, and on the banks of the Severn, occupying himself in angling, at which he was 'quite a proficient,' and in making mimic water-wheels with his knife, and fixing them in the miniature cataracts which gurgled over the mossy roots at the river side. 'It was then,' he says, 'that I first began rhyming,' though he does not remember what his first production was. It was then, too, that his mechanical genius, which has ever since gone hand-in-hand with his passion for poetry, began to develop itself, the mimic water-wheel being its first essay. The innocent pleasures of these days are well described in the following verses which he wrote a

few years after. I imagine, however, from the appearance of the manuscript, which is now in my possession, and from grammatical deficiency in the first four lines, that some preceding verses have been torn off.

'My native home, in the woods away,
Where I pass'd, with content, my youth's bright day:
Where Nature and Love, the shades among,
Imbued my heart with affections strong.
Oh! tell me not of the sights so rare,
And the sounds so sweet that in cities are,
Far dearer to me is Nature's chaunt
And Nature's scenes in my woodland haunt,
For I love the song of the tuneful bird,
And the ring-dove's coo in the distance heard,
The echoing sound of the cow-boy's call,
And the dash of the mimic waterfall;
And I love to stray to my lonely nook
'Mid the flowerets gay by the crystal brook:
To stretch me at length in the grassy glade,
And survey the beauties of light and shade:
To behold the light bound of the timid roe,
Or gaze on the river's ceaseless flow,
And at eve thro' the tangled copse to roam
To the dear delights of my woodland home.'

But young Stackall was soon to leave the 'dear delights of his woodland home.' He had just turned his fifteenth year when he was taken to Cledbury Mortimer to be apprenticed to a paper manufacturer, with whom he remained twelve years. But he never cordially liked his trade, it was too unintellectual, and afforded no scope for his prevailing genius. Meanwhile, however, he had been improving himself with great diligence in the principles of mechanics, which

he studied chiefly in an elementary work by Ferguson. By way of *practice* he tried his hand occasionally on a friend's watches. His success was so great that, in a year or two after, he finally and for ever abandoned the rags and took to the *mainspring*, and is now established at Cledbury Mortimer as a country watchmaker with a good reputation and a fair trade. I must not forget to mention that he has a wife and three children.

I have now to tell you of a very interesting and, I believe, important discovery which he has made in the art of watch-making. About a year and a half ago he invented a new movement, by which, at a comparatively little cost, all the real advantages of the 'escapement' can be introduced into the old *vertical* watches. The effect of this new principle is to give steadiness to the movements, to lessen friction, and in fact to make even old watches go right well again. He has already introduced this new movement into several watches—amongst others into one belonging to a friend of mine,—and with *complete success*. At present, he tells me, he is in treaty for his new 'escapement' with a watch manufacturer for whom he is finishing a first-rate movement. And then the matter will most likely be taken out of his hands, as the poor man has no capital to enable him to make the most of his invention and bring it before the public.

I have now before me the manuscript of two pieces which he wrote when he was twenty-two years of age. One is entitled 'Boaz and Ruth' (dramatic poetry); the other, 'Persecution and Piety,' a religi-

ous drama, taken from the 6th and 7th chapters of Maccabees. They are characterized by considerable command of language, correctness of thought, and some imagination in filling up the outline of the text. The following, from 'Ruth,' is a fair specimen of the whole. Ruth has just left her mother (Chap. ii, 2-3) for the purpose of gleaning after the reapers. As she walks along she hears the birds warbling their sweet matins, and exclaims:—

'I'll raise my voice, and join their pleasing strain.
King of glory, Lord of all,
Ruler of this earthly ball;
Ev'ry plant, and ev'ry flower,
Ev'ry shrub, and ev'ry tree,
Show Thy wisdom, love, and power,
And impartiality:
From Thy helpless handmaid's tongue,
O, accept a sacred song.

'Earth's Creator, wise and good,
Wake, O, wake my gratitude!
May my ardent praise arise
Swift before Thy glorious throne
As the morning sacrifice,
And regard me as Thine own.
O, thou weary wand'rers' friend,
Up to Thee my thanks ascend.'

'I'll cross with haste this dew-bespangled mead,
Where lowing cattle on the herbage feed,
And shape my course to yonder tillage land,
Where shocks of well-set barley thickly stand,
And ask the leader of the rural train
To let me with his maidens pick the grain.

'O, Lord of Hosts, who reign'st enthron'd in light,
Grant that I may find favour in his sight,

And give me strength to labour well this day
That, when night draws her sable shrouds, I may
Have gathered much: for then the pleasing sight
Will fill my Naomi's heart with pure delight.
(Entering the reaper's field.)
'As with a bridle, Lord, control my tongue,
If I should converse with this joyous throng;
And may my words and actions plainly prove
That I am rul'd by Thy superior love.'

Four or five years after he had written dramatic pieces he published a little collection of songs and poems, some of which, I am told, have become quite household words among the cottagers around him. As you have a copy of this collection, I need not give any extracts from it. I would only say that two favourites are, 'The Rea' and 'The Cradle.' But his little poems no sooner appeared in print than he discovered here and there many instances of bad taste, and he was now as anxious to suppress as he had been before to publish. Since then I believe he has only written one short hymn on 'The Extension of Christ's Kingdom.' His time is now chiefly taken up with his new invention.

This short sketch contains all I have at present to say about the humble poet of Cledbury Mortimer, but should it in any degree increase that interest which you have already so kindly expressed for him; or should it—in the event of its appearing in the periodical you name—awaken in others a generous and *well-directed* sympathy, I shall be happy and well rewarded.

I remain, my dear madam, yours very truly,

W. LYNN.

MRS. HOWITT *to* MISS MITFORD.

The Elms, Lower Clapton, July 7, [1846?].

MY DEAR MISS MITFORD,

I must tell you what, I am sure, will please you, and that is that Miss Cushman, the American actress, is one of your warmest admirers. She acted in 'Rienzi' in her own land. She is a glorious creature —a splendid actress, and appears as superior in character as in talent. One thing only she seems to want to make her the first, the very first actress of the day, and that is beauty of face. It is a drawback to the first effect as an actress, but she is glorious, spite of this—and can more be said of her? There will not, perhaps, be the *furor* about her among the *young* men, but the sound-hearted will acknowledge her power and her greatness. But, after all, she is *beautiful*—beautiful in the highest and noblest sense; beautiful in intellectual expression, in feeling, in sentiment! I know no one who so rapidly took hold on our hearts as she did, and has done.

This glorious and noble creature, then, loves and admires you, and has a desire to pay you a visit. Will you write, and bid her welcome to your 'bower of roses'? Her address is 92, New Bond Street.

We, too, some time or other, will look in upon you, if you will permit it. For the present, however, we are very busy, working like dragons—if dragons do work—to be at liberty for two or three months in the autumn in Italy. It is worth working for, and almost seems too good for our actual enjoyment, but

we are at present believing that we may accomplish it, and that is charming.

My husband is just about setting out to Scotland for a few weeks. He is working at his 'Homes and Haunts of the Poets,' which will be his next work—a work which you will like.

Pardon this scrawl, and, with my husband's kind regards, believe me, my dear Miss Mitford,

Yours ever,

M. HOWITT.

SERGEANT TALFOURD *to* MISS MITFORD.

Sergeant's Inn, July 8, 1846.

MY DEAR MISS MITFORD,

I should have written yesterday to acknowledge your letter and subscription to the Haydon Fund, which will be very consolatory to his family, but that the sudden death of our excellent Chief Justice has deranged everything—almost the minds of those who practised daily before him.

I think there is no doubt of our obtaining all we can wish for Mrs. and Miss Haydon. The Royal Academy have very nobly subscribed £50, and the wealthy patrons of art will, I doubt not, contribute.

I trust Miss Barrett, to whom in his last paper, irrespective of a will, Mr. Haydon leaves his papers, will not involve herself in difficulty by acting on his wishes without very sound advice, for he was (as he states) £3,000 in debt, and it would be a sad thing if 'our great poetess' (as I may justly call her) should be entangled in a dispute with his creditors, as she

might have been by taking care of his property before, if bankruptcy or insolvency had arisen.

Believe me to remain, my dear Miss Mitford,

Ever truly yours,

T. TALFOURD.

Sergeant Talfourd had been educated at Dr. Valpy's school at Reading, and was a life-long friend of Miss Mitford.[1] His love of the drama, which led to the production of 'Ion,' seems to have been fostered by his school training. He introduced Miss Mitford's plays to Macready, and was often consulted by her on literary subjects. She says that 'his eloquence was great and glorious,' and that he was brilliant in conversation. When she was staying at his house in Russell Square, the Duke of Devonshire called on her, and there she met many celebrities—Douglas Jerrold, Ellen Tree,[2] Crabbe Robinson, Landor, Kenyon, &c.

She likens Talfourd to Haydon in conversation, manner, and enthusiasm. Haydon's history and suicide are well known. He attempted to retrieve his fortune by exhibiting a cartoon opposite Tom Thumb's rooms. But the 'General' proved the only successful attraction, and Miss Mitford says that 'the grotesque bitterness of the antagonism was too much for Haydon —the dwarf slew the giant.' Haydon had been introduced to Miss Barrett by Miss Mitford, and had left with Miss Barrett, a few days before his death, his papers and the portrait he took of Miss Mitford.

[1] They both died in the same year.

[2] Afterwards Mrs. Kean.

MRS. HOWITT *to* MISS MITFORD.

The Elms, Clapham, December 16, 1846.

MY DEAR MISS MITFORD,

I wrote to you several months ago to request you to become a contributor to the 'People's Journal,' in which we had just then become concerned, and you were kind enough to consent. Since then this little periodical has succeeded far beyond the most sanguine expectations . . . . But we shall withdraw entirely from Mr. Saunders and the 'People's Journal' as soon as possible. This is very mortifying to us, because it is ourselves who have made its success. However, to save ourselves we must get free, and it is now Mr. Howitt's determination to commence his own journal on the 1st of January, and thus he will be able to work freely and fully for the people and literature, without danger or impediment of any kind.

Our friend, Henry Chorley, knows the whole business, and has promised to talk with you about it on Sunday, when he is with you. And what we now want, dear Miss Mitford, is that you will allow us to announce your name with those of our 'illustrious friends,' as Douglas Jerrold calls them, who will support us in our undertaking. And more than this, we want you *really* and truly to give us some nice little country sketch for one of our early numbers. Do this, dear friend, and you will really serve us.

We have seen a good deal of Alfred Tennyson lately, and like him quite as well as the *man* as the

poet. He is really a noble creature, with one of the purest, kindest spirits.

William unites with me in kindest regards.

I am, dear Miss Mitford,

Yours faithfully,

M. HOWITT.

MR. A. DYCE *to* MISS MITFORD.

9, Gray's Inn Square, London.
August 16, 1847.

MY DEAR MISS MITFORD,

At last I send you the *Beggar Girl*, and, unfortunately, a copy in such beggarly condition, that I cannot say 'I have much pleasure in sending it to you.' But since, from all accounts, there is little chance of a better copy turning up, I must request you to overlook the filth and shabbiness of the present one. I should be sorry to answer 'no' to any request which you might make me, else I should certainly refuse the verses and autograph (MY verses and MY autograph!) to your fair young friend, whose name, by-the-by, it is impossible to make out from Harness's vile handwriting.[1] The fancy that 'the gods had made me poetical' has, I assure you, long ago passed away with many other pleasing delusions.

Believe me, my dear Miss Mitford,

Always very truly yours,

ALEX. DYCE.

[1] Mr. Harness's writing was sometimes microscopically small, though generally clear.

MRS. CLIVE *to* MISS MITFORD.

Whitfield, February 21 [1849?]

MY DEAR MISS MITFORD,

The neighbours and we have set up a book-club since the beginning of this year, and I want to beg you to tell me of some *booklings* for it. We have got Macaulay and Layard, and the 'Monasteries of the Levant,' and other big books, but I want some moderately moral French novel, or some very amusing two and sixpence or five-shilling English book to keep the thing going. Such a book as 'La Mare au Diable,' or 'La Chasse au Roman,' would be the thing, or Murray's 'Life of Condé,' or his 'Memoirs of a Missionary.' Can you kindly recommend some?

I hope the mild weather has agreed with you, and the returning spring will find you able to enjoy it. The children bring me primroses from the woods and violets from the garden every day, and we have all enjoyed days in which we could loiter along on foot or on horseback without thinking of our gloves or our comforters. We went to Hartlebury last month, the Bishop of Worcester's. It is a very picturesque place, the gardens of which are made out of part of the moat, and the walk to them is under the castle wall, with ivy and myrtle bushes growing against it. The bishop seems a sort of Knight Templar in his castle, with his great courtyard, great hall, ample dining-room, and long corridor, where he reads morning prayers to his family and guests. Nicolas Breakspear, they say, was Bishop of Worcester before he was Pope. Bishop Hough's library is in the house—an heirloom of the See, and Latimer's memory is fresh

about the place. Our own bishop, the much discussed Hampden, is a mild, shy man, who keeps his talents under the thickest veil he can find; but he is willing to talk on any *un*learned subject. He misses the lilacs of his parsonage in the garden of his palace.

Mr. Clive desires me not to close my letter without remembering him very kindly to you. Pray accept our united best wishes, and

Believe me,

Sincerely yours,

CAROLINE CLIVE.

Mrs. Archer Clive was the author of the well-known sensational novel 'Paul Ferroll.' Miss Mitford speaks in commendation of her poetry: 'Mrs. Archer Clive has just published a poem with a touch of Scott's landscape power,' and again: 'I have seen Mrs. Archer Clive, a great friend. She sent me the other day her poem "The Queen's Ball," of which the subject is most striking—one hundred and fifty persons were invited, who are dead! The Clives are all rich.' Miss Mitford remarks that Mrs. Clive was charming, cheerful, and light-hearted, in strange contrast to the melancholy tone of her writings.

SERGEANT TALFOURD *to* MISS MITFORD.

Russell Square, January 3, 1852.

MY DEAR MISS MITFORD,

Although I have not yet received from Mr. Bentley the volumes your kindness appropriated to me,[1] I have made acquaintance with them at the

[1] 'Recollections of a Literary Life.'

Athenæum; not indeed fully yet—for they are so popular that yesterday I was unable to find one of them out of hand. I have, however, enjoyed enough of them to be able to wish you joy of a new work worthy of your great and enduring reputation—with enough of happily selected subjects to make it interesting to all, and enough of personal reference to render it doubly interesting to your large circle of friends. Turning naturally to the chapter which commemorates the 'marriage of true hearts,' and of high geniuses, in the destiny of the Brownings, I was happy to find myself honoured by the revival of a recollection in which you form so gratifying a part, and I was, if possible, still more touched by your most kind allusion to me in the concluding chapter, in which the scene of some of my very happiest hours is the subject of a noble farewell. I rejoice greatly to find that, while the association connected with the delightful spot will never perish, you have found so pleasant a home without violent disruption—only, in truth, another corner in the same garden; for all the neighbourhood *is* a garden, only adorned beyond the reach of art. I hope I may one day visit you there, and renew old happiness for an hour; but I have no call now to Reading, and my long absence from home on the circuits renders me almost ashamed to propose solitary excursions; so that, I am afraid, I shall not very soon realise the hope. I trust, however, before the next autumn's gold is quite shivered I shall walk very gently through 'our village' to Swallowfield.

Lady Talfourd joins with me in all the good

wishes the season prompts, and trusting that you may have many happy new years to give us more happy books,

I remain, my dear Miss Mitford,

Ever truly yours,

TH. TALFOURD.

MRS. TROLLOPE *to* MISS MITFORD.

Florence, April, 1852.

The sight of your well-known and dearly-remembered handwriting, dearest Miss Mitford, produced an effect upon me that I can hardly describe. It was, for a moment, very much as if I had been looking at you—and greatly did I rejoice at the sight, but, alas! the precious bit of paper was soon exhausted, and then I only wished the more that I could get sight of yourself. I had been out all the morning, and the note was given to me with Mr. Fields' card as I went into the dining-room. My son immediately proclaimed his intention of calling on Mr. Fields on the following day; and this he did, but without being so fortunate as to see him. We were at that time in all the bustle of the last days of the carnival, and *especially* occupied in preparing for charades, which were to be performed at the house of a friend, who gave a ball afterwards, expected to be one of the gayest of the season, and for this entertainment I procured an invitation for Mr. Fields, but, alas! instead of having the pleasure of seeing him, I received a note from him informing me that he was on the point of starting for Rome. His purpose in going at that moment was, I presume, to be present at the ceremonies

of the Holy Week. These are no longer, I am told, so splendid as they have been, but there is still enough of ceremony left to gratify those who have never before witnessed anything of the kind. I have been in daily hope of seeing him return, but I now suppose that he is gone on to Naples; yet still I hope that we may catch sight of him before he takes his final leave of Italy, and before we quit Florence, according to our annual custom, for the summer. We have a very delightful residence here, one pleasant feature of which is a large garden, where we literally sit under the shade of our orange-trees; but, though this is very pleasant, we deem it prudent during the heat of an Italian summer to get away to the fresh breezes of the mountain districts. The Baths of Lucca are within fifty miles of us, and it is probable that we shall re-visit them this summer. But for the next two months we shall continue here, and shall hope during that time to catch a sight of your wandering friend.

And so you are living at Swallowfield. That name is redolent of youth, and singing birds, and shady lanes, and banks of primroses and violets. And happy am I to say that I could *still* wander for miles among them with as much pleasure and pretty nearly as much activity as half a century ago. *Of course* you have a garden, for *you* would not be *you* without it. You would find our beautiful Italy woefully behind your scientific England in the *cultivation* of flowers. You would scorn our very best geraniums as you would the merest weed, nor do I know anything, except our noble orange and lemon-trees, in

which our gardens would compete with yours. Still less could we rival you in forest-trees. My eye has learned to love the pale gray-green of the olive, but, compared with an oak or an elm, it is but as a sickly dwarf beside a stalwart giant. But for all that, there is a most delicious sort of harmony in the whole landscape, which enchants me beyond all I have ever looked upon; and this, as I take it, is owing to the purity of the light, and the surpassing and intense blueness of the sky. Our blue is not like your blue; it is deeply dark, though as clear as limpid water. Claude, and Claude alone, gives some idea of this. The *clearness* of light, which is so marvellously attained by the Flemish artists, is of a totally different quality. As to our scenery, Switzerland, Germany, ay, and England too, can often show *much* finer. But for the *effect*, and its power of bewitching the eye, it is magical!

Believe me, my dear Miss Mitford,

Very affectionately yours,

FRANCES TROLLOPE.

H. C. ROBINSON *to* MISS MITFORD.

30, Russell Square, August 24, 1852.

MY DEAR MISS MITFORD,

There can be no objection taken to the school to which you propose to give £200. Nor is it likely that any of us five will object to be considered as the joint trustee-donor of what is proposed by any other of us.

The only thing to be apprehended was that as two of the trustees are *ladies*, one of them—having

caught the influenza of the season, which seizes especially imaginative and tender natures—might have been desirous to endow a *nunnery*. Our reverend associate inclines, I believe, to the Genevan rather than Romish side of the Anglican church, and it is very likely that he will make a proposal similar to yours. You make a remark in which I fully concur as to Mrs. Niven's personal feelings. She might probably, had her attention been drawn to the subject, have been more precise in her intimations.

Had I been aware of her intentions, I should certainly have suggested to her that she might do good in the way of example by devoting the whole £1,000 to the cause of *female* education, which is neglected in England disgracefully.

My friend Mrs. *Reid* (a most heroically generous woman) advanced £1,600, to set on foot the *Ladies'* College, but it is struggling against unpopularity. Mrs. Niven was herself in the catalogue of poets, though she had not acquired the distinction conferred on one of her trustees. And therefore, had nothing better presented itself to you, it would have suited well, to *you* especially, to be the appointee in such a case. Endowments ought to vary, and unusual gifts lead to a repetition of them. On this ground I successfully applied to Lady Chantrey to contribute to the Flaxman Gallery—she being the foundress of the Chantrey Gallery. Miss Mitford's name is known in the world, and would have served to bring into notice one of the lady colleges recently set up in London. The indirect effect of all acts of beneficence is often more important than the

direct. There is matter to dream about for nine months at least. I have not mentioned the subject to Miss Denman yet.

To-morrow I set out to join the Archæological Institute at Newcastle-on-Tyne. The fine season for travelling is yet to come. Wishing you the enjoyment of many seasons as fine as the present,

I am,

Faithfully yours,

H. C. ROBINSON.

Miss Mitford seems to have known Crabbe Robinson through her friends the Perrys.

CHAPTER VII.

LETTERS FROM JAMES FIELDS, MISS DE QUINCEY, J. RUSKIN, SERGEANT TALFOURD, AND HARRIET MARTINEAU.

THE best portrait of Miss Mitford was taken by Lucas in 1852. She made it a present to Mr. Fields, and it is now in America.

MR. FIELDS *to* MISS MITFORD.

72, Regent Street, London.
Saturday morning, [1852 ?]

MY DEAR MISS MITFORD,

Thank you heartily for the notes to Mr. Chorley and Mr. Lucas. I shall probably call to-day on Mr. Lucas, as I am anxious to see my picture, as you may well suppose. That copy of 'Bentley' I put into my pocket on purpose for you the day I went down to Swallowfield. I have got already several for myself. Pray keep the one I left. That day at Swallowfield, and that ride to the cricket-match! Ah! these things will all tend to make my embarkation for America sad indeed. But I don't intend to go very soon, I promise you. Every day of my stay in England adds another week to my intentions touching the return

home. The truth is, no man was ever treated with such kindness before in Europe, I am convinced, and I am in no hurry to leave a land I love so much. What I have done to deserve all this, I do not remember. The days and nights are not long enough to include the pleasant things that are constantly happening to me. Yesterday I breakfasted with dear Mr. Kenyon, and did not forget your message of love to him. He is the same genial and delightful person I had the good fortune to meet before I went into Italy. And how much I owe to him for bringing me to your door at Three Mile Cross! Ah! I wish it were in my power to repay something of all the kindness I am constantly receiving at his hands.

You ask if Longfellow is a clergyman. He is not, and never was. His brother, Samuel Longfellow, now residing in Paris, was once a pulpit man, but he has given up the profession, and taken to practice. I remember a good story of Dr. Channing in this way. The *reverend* doctor and the *medical* doctor were both at a party in Boston one evening, and, some one being taken ill, the man of medicines, Dr. Walter Channing, was sent for. The servant entered the room where the brothers were seated, and said, 'Dr. Channing is wanted.' 'Which Dr. Channing?' said Walter, the physician; 'the one who *preaches*, or the one who *practises?*'

I have a great favour to ask of you. My brother-in-law and his wife (William Ware's niece) have arrived in London, and they, I know, would be delighted beyond measure should I ask them to accom-

pany me to Swallowfield some day during their stay here. Will you allow me to say to them, 'Come, jump into the cart and go down to Reading, where I will show you Miss Mitford's former residence, and afterwards take you over to see her for an hour.' Of course I do not intend to inflict you with a *long* visit, but I should be glad to give them the opportunity of meeting one of whom they have heard so much, and of whose writings they are such warm admirers. It would only amount to a call, as I do not wish you to fatigue yourself beyond a little chat in your cottage. It will be something they will never forget, and a favour I feel inclined to ask, knowing your good nature in these matters. I shall not say a word to them till I first hear from you.

Sam was quite right; we did have to gallop for it that day we left your house, and shall I soon forget how the bystanders stared as we came thundering up to the station just in time to use the English cry of 'All right,' and whizz off to London! But that ride along the wooded avenues in your pony-chaise, and the scene on that grassy plain! It was all beautiful exceedingly, and I care not how soon I get away into the country again, 'through the green leaves exploring.' I almost envy Sam his seat in that fairy car, as the little nag flies over the ground, in his funny little way, so swiftly. But I shall go again to Swallowfield, and enjoy another drive with you, ere long.

Ever yours,

J. T. FIELDS.

The next letter is a reply to one written by Miss Mitford to Mr. de Quincey, at Mr. Fields' suggestion.

MISS DE QUINCEY *to* MISS MITFORD.

Mavis Bush, Lasswade, October 13, 1852.

MY DEAR MADAM,

When your kind and most flattering letter arrived, my second sister and I, who generally act as my father's amanuenses, were paying a visit in Edinburgh, consequently, as my youngest sister is not yet broken in to this duty, it has gone thus long unanswered; and, if we were to give in to my father's desire, the chance is it would go totally so—not because he undervalues the honour you have done him, but because he rates it so highly that he determines to do it, not by proxy, but personally, and has already written something, I believe, little short of a good-sized pamphlet.[1] But, as experience teaches us that delays, if not hindrances, undreamed of by all but De Quincey philosophy, will occur before the time when it can be 'signed, sealed, and delivered' to the post, we have begged that we may be allowed to send a sort of harbinger to explain why the answer is so long in making its appearance. I

[1] Miss Mitford writes to Mr. Fields in December, 1852: 'The pamphlet has not yet arrived. I fear it is for ever buried in the De Quincey "chaos."' We find in 'De Quincey's Life,' by 'H. A. Page,' that he eventually sent a letter to Miss Mitford, saying that he had already written three for her, and that the reason he did not generally finish and post his letters was that 'whatever he may be writing becomes suddenly overspread by a dark frenzy of horror,' which he does not attribute entirely to his former use of opium.

am therefore commissioned to say, with his most respectful regards, with what infinite pleasure he will avail himself of your and Mr. Pearson's courteous and hospitable invitation to visit you, should he ever be within a possible distance of doing so, but, as there is no immediate prospect of such being the case on his part, he and we join in hoping that, should you or Mr. Pearson be in our neighbourhood, you will let us all have the happiness of making your acquaintance.

Few things for many years have given my father such unmingled gratification as your letter. I don't pretend to say *why*, as among his correspondents—if those can be called correspondents where the correspondence is all on one side—there are many who strike *us* as being as truly kind and gracious in their expression of goodwill towards him as yourself, but such is the case.

I have just received a letter from your kind and genial favourite, Mr. Fields, and, should you not have heard from himself yet, I quote what he says of his passage: 'We had what the other passengers called a good voyage, but what I suffered I will not attempt to describe; I can only say that when we sailed up Boston Harbour I was an easier and better man.' We fully agree with you, as far as our short acquaintance goes, in all you say in his praise, for we saw him not only in his character of a 'thoroughly large-minded, liberal man,' but also in that of a joyous, entertaining companion, and since then we have had to thank him for spreading papa's 'good report' in places where most we feel pleasure in its going, your-

self being the chief. He seems to be one of those sunny spirits who radiates his own bright warmth wherever he goes.

As regards your and Mr. Pearson's flattering inquiry about a collection of my father's articles in England, or whether the American edition will be available in this country, I leave him to answer for himself.

With kindest regards, in which my sisters beg to join (papa having already sent his both to you and Mr. Pearson), I beg to remain, my dear madam, with much respect,

Very faithfully,
M. DE QUINCEY.

MISS DE QUINCEY *to* MISS MITFORD.

Mavis Bush, Lasswade, March 14, 1853.

MY DEAR MISS MITFORD,

A few days ago I had a letter from Mr. Fields, in which he mentions some accident you have met with; but, taking it for granted that we have heard of it, he does not say of what nature, but merely expresses his sympathy with us in what he justly supposes will be our feelings about it, having heard it. Papa wished me at the time to write directly and learn what it was, but I was on the eve of leaving home for a day only, as I then supposed, in such a hurry that I could not do so; and, having been from home more than a week, a longer time has elapsed than I expected, as I could not write *from* home, not having your address.

Papa tells me to say he heartily agrees with you in

your admiration of Louis Napoleon (what if you have both arrived at your admiration of him by the most opposite roads, and for the most opposite reasons!), and he has been so disgusted by the senseless attacks made by the *Times* and other papers upon him that, but for the fiend Procrastination holding him back and causing him to become merely a great pavior in the way of good intentions, he would have done *his* part in exposing their folly in so totally forgetting how England had benefited by Louis *Nap's* conduct. This latter part is a *true* addition of my own to papa's message. I was also to tell you that he agreed with you too in your *detestation* of 'Uncle Tom's Cabin,' but I told him you had not said you detested it, but that it was too painful to read, upon which he withdrew his message, but cherishes a hope that, if ever you do read it, you *will* detest it . . .

Papa *does*, and my sisters would—but they are from home at present—join me in kindest regards, and hopes to hear a good report of you, and believe me to remain, dear Miss Mitford,

Your sincere friend,
M. De Quincey.

In a letter to Mrs. Partridge dated January 27, 1847, Miss Mitford asks—'Have you read an Oxford graduate's "Letters on Art"? The author, Mr. Ruskin, was here last week, and is certainly the most charming person that I have ever known.' In her 'Recollections of a Literary Life,' published in 1852, she says that Mr. Ruskin will understand why she connects his name with the latest event which has

happened to her, the necessary removal from her little cottage at Three Mile Cross. Mr. Ruskin was principally associated with Miss Mitford towards the end of her life, and especially after she was incapacitated by a fall from her pony-chaise. His kindness cheered her closing days; he sent her every book that would interest, and every delicacy that would strengthen her, attentions which will not surprise those who have heard of his large and thoughtful generosity.

J. RUSKIN *to* MISS MITFORD.

Keswick, Cumberland, Good Friday, 1853.

MY DEAR MISS MITFORD,

The pain of deep self-reproach was mixed with the delight which your letter gave me yesterday. Two months back I was each day on the point of writing to you to ask for your sympathy—the kindest and keenest sympathy that, I think, ever filled the breadth and depth of an unselfish heart. But my purpose was variously stayed, chiefly, as I remember, by the events on the Continent, fraught to me with very deep disappointment, and casting me into a depression and fever of spirit which, joined with some other circumstances nearer home, have, until now that I am resting with my kind wife among these quiet hills, denied me the heart to write cheerfully to those very dear friends to whom I would fain never write sadly. And now your letter comes with all its sweetness and all its sting. My very dear lady, believe me, I am deeply gratified for your goodness, in a state of wonderment at its continuance to me—cold and unthankful as I have seemed,—and I earnestly hope that in

future it may not so frequently have to take the form of forgiveness, nor my sense of it that of remorse.

Nor did I shrink more from the silent blame than from the painful news of your letter, though I conjecture that your escape, though narrow, was complete—you say nothing of any hurt received. I hate ponies and everything four-legged, except an ass colt and an arm-chair. But you are better and the spring is come, and I hope, for I am sure you will allow me, to bring my young wife to be rejoiced (under the shadow of her new and grievous lot) by your kind comforting. But pray keep her out of your garden, or she will certainly lose her wits with pure delight, or perhaps insist on staying with you and letting me finding my way through the world by myself, a task which I should not *now* like to undertake. I should be very, very happy just now but for these wild storm-clouds bursting on my dear Italy and my fair France, my occupation gone, and all my earthly treasures (except the one I have just acquired and the everlasting Alps) periled amidst the 'tumult of the people,' the 'imagining of vain things.' Ah, my dear Miss Mitford, see what your favourite 'Berangers' and 'Gerald Griffins' do! But these are thoughts as selfish as they are narrow. I begin to feel that all the work I have been doing, and all the loves I have been cherishing, are ineffective and frivolous—that these are not times for watching clouds or dreaming over quiet waters, that more serious work is to be done, and that the time for endurance has come rather than for meditation, and for hope rather than for happiness. Happy those whose hope, without

this severe and tearful rending away of all the props and stability of earthly enjoyments, has been fixed 'where the wicked cease from troubling.' Mine was not; it was based on 'those pillars of the earth' which are 'astonished at His reproof.'

I have, however, passed this week very happily here. We have a good clergyman, Mr. Myers, and I am recovering trust and tranquillity, though I had been wiser to have come to your fair English pastures and flowering meadows, rather than to these moorlands, for they make me feel too painfully the splendour, not to be in any wise resembled or replaced—of those mighty scenes, which I can reach no more—at least for a time. I am thinking, however, of a tour among our English abbeys—a feature which our country possesses of peculiar loveliness. As for our mountains or lakes, it is in vain that they are defended for their finish or their prettiness. The people who admire them after Switzerland do not understand Switzerland—even Wordsworth does not. Our mountains are mere bogs and lumps of spongey moorland, and our lakes are little swampy fish-ponds, It is curious I can take more pleasure in the chalk downs of Sussex, which pretend to nothing, than in these would-be hills, and I believe I shall have more pleasure in your pretty lowland scenery and richly-painted gardens than in all the pseudo-sublime of the barren Highlands, except Killiecrankie. I went and knelt beside the stone that marks the spot of Claver's death-wound and prayed for more such spirits—we need them now.

My wife begs me to return her sincere thanks for

your kind message, and to express to you the delight with which she looks forward to being presented to you—remembering what I told her among some of my first pleadings with her that, whatever faults she might discover in her husband, he could at least promise her friends, whom she would have every cause to love and to honour. She needs them, but I think also deserves them.

Ever, my dear Miss Mitford, believe me,
Faithfully and affectionately yours,
J. RUSKIN.

P.S.—I ought to tell you that we have sent cards to *no one*, or most certainly this formality would not have been omitted with Miss Mitford.

Miss Mitford says, 'There is a richness and transparency in Mr. Ruskin's writing that has scarcely ever been equalled. Such beauty and power of expression is not to be found in any letters which I have received. He is the best letter-writer of his or any age.'

MR. TALFOURD *to* MISS MITFORD.

Oxford Circuit, Oxford, March 6, 1853.

MY DEAR MISS MITFORD,

I send you by post one of a very few copies I had *printed* of a drama, which had supplied materials of idle labour at intervals for some years, as I know that anything in the form of composition in which you have wrought so much, and in respect of which we have had so many exciting passages of life together, will have an interest for you besides that

which I know you would feel in any effort of mine. I have not given any other copy away in Berkshire, not to any of our mutual friends, except our best and kindest, William Harness; nor has it, I think, been seen by a dozen people, so that it is a very private sin at present, and likely to remain so, unless it should be thought better of by friends than by its author.

I hear, with great sorrow, that you are still suffering from the effects of your accident, and, therefore, I hope you will not incur the fatigue of acknowledging this, but leave the slender merits of this work of declining age to be discussed when I next see you, which shall certainly be the next time I get a day in Berkshire.

I daresay you remember how prettily Jackson, the new Bishop of Lincoln, played Hamlet—in spite of our dear doctor's teaching.[1] What a delight to him the bishopric would have been had he lived to know it!

Believe me to remain, my dear Miss Mitford,

Ever truly yours,

TH. TALFOURD.

MISS MARTINEAU *to* MISS MITFORD.

The Knoll, Ambleside,
January 25, [No date—1853?].

DEAR MISS MITFORD,

I am obliged to you for introducing to me your agreeable young friend. I have seen him once *here*, and I am to see him next at his airy lodgings at

[1] Dr. Jackson, the present Bishop of London, was one of Dr. Valpy's pupils at Reading.

Longbrigg. He made us promise to visit him some evening, and we hope to do so while the fine weather lasts. The 'we' means my youngest sister, Mrs. Higginson, and her children, who are with me at present. Mr. Payne will have us all, and he has the grandest thing in all the neighbourhood to show us —in the view from the home-field. He is kind enough to send me his volume of poems to-day, and I must make more acquaintance with him in that way before we meet next. He has every appearance of being in good health; and I trust his critical period in that respect has passed.

I wish he could have given me a better account of your health. I fear you, with your love of eternal Nature, and your habits of country roving, must feel your privations very keenly. But I see, with a sort of sad pleasure, how, when the privations of age come on, they seem *natural* to those who have to endure them, and can be better borne than we should before have supposed possible. As for me, I absolutely enjoy the symptoms of growing old, and find the privileges of years thus far out of all proportion to any incipient evil that has occurred as yet. I am somewhat less brisk since I turned fifty than before; but I am abundantly strong and well, and the tranquillizing effects of the sober period I have reached, are very sweet to such a lover of quiet as I am. After this one summer I do not mean to be so desperately overworked any more, as I have been for some years; and I have a strong impression that I shall find, as so many do, that the decline of life is its best part. No fear of any of us being idle, any of us

who have health to work, for the world cannot afford a full holy day at present to any of its labourers; and to work for conscience, and not too much for that, and for health, while merging one's personal interests in wider ones, is my ideal of a happy decline. If it takes place in the country, as you and I have chosen that ours should, it is all the sweeter.

I heard a good deal of Mrs. Browning when she was in London, and was glad to find she keeps up her improved condition, frail as she is. I wish she could have recovered from her illness as thoroughly as I have from mine; but her recovery thus far is a great marvel.

Again thanking you for your note and its object,

I am, dear Miss Mitford,

Very truly yours,

HARRIET MARTINEAU.

MISS DE QUINCEY *to* MISS MITFORD.

Mavis Bush, Lasswade, September 14, 1853.

MY DEAR MISS MITFORD,

What a wretch you will think me! and yet I don't deserve from *you* this opinion. I have only within this last ten minutes had your note given to me, and that not until I had waged war for its possession with papa, who had carried it off into 'durance vile,' and insisted upon it that there was nothing requiring special notice, that he could tell me all, and such-like stuff, which I thought, with Dogberry, 'was most tolerable, and not to be endured,' so I kept up a sort of starling cry for my letter, and lo! my efforts have been rewarded, for

here it is, the kindest and sweetest note possible.

Mr. Payne, I am sorry to say, both for your account and papa's, and my youngest sister's of him, neither Florence nor I saw . . . . . I was very sorry, too, on another account that we were not at home, viz., that Emily told us that papa was in very bad spirits when Mr. Payne called, and, when he is so, it requires our united efforts to rout him out of them; as it was, Emily said, 'He called in all my small remarks, made to suggest things to him, or to cover the gaps like light sovereigns.' It was the first time she had ever had to do the honours of the house alone, and consequently she has great misgivings as to whether Mr. Payne will ever run the risk of falling upon the tender mercies of two such wickeds as papa and she again.

Now for our visit to Oxfordshire, and our hoped-for visit to Swallowfield. Emily and I were three weeks in Oxon, and, for the fortnight we were at Lord Valentine's, sufficiently near a railway to make me think a great deal about it, and at one time it was half arranged that some of our friends, the Annesleys, were to take me, but there were two fatal obstacles in the way.

Four days after I reached my native village of Grasmere I was taken so ill that, for the rest of the four weeks I was there, I never left the house till I came home, and it has sent my sister Florence and I home in a perfect *furore* of disgust at everything here, and rabid to go back to Westmoreland to live, for our native air did not do us any damage, though it failed to do all the expected good.

Will you now let us hear how you are, or, better still, send Mr. Payne or Mr. Pearson to *tell* us? All join in kind love, and believe me to remain,

My dear Miss Mitford,
Your affectionate friend,
M. DE QUINCEY.

P.S.—Pray for our going to Westmoreland, as nothing but some such convulsion will unearth your letter.

Miss Mitford says that a friend of hers went to spend an evening with De Quincey—evidently Mr. Fields, who edited his works, and took the profits to him to Scotland—and found him 'marvellous in conversation; looking like an old beggar, with the manners of a prince.' Margaret was De Quincey's eldest daughter, and was delicate in health, but managed his house with great care and economy.[1] The family had lived for a quarter of a century at Grasmere, in a cottage which had previously been occupied by Wordsworth.

[1] She married in 1853 Mr. Robert Craig, a manufacturer in Ireland.

CHAPTER VIII.

LETTERS FROM J. WHITTIER, J. RUSKIN, TOM TAYLOR, DEAN MILMAN, AND BAYARD TAYLOR.

AMONG the poets honourably mentioned in Miss Mitford's 'Recollections of a Literary Life,' we find the name of Whittier. She calls him 'the most intensely national of American bards.' He wrote against slavery and religious intolerance.

J. G. WHITTIER *to* MISS MITFORD.

Amerbury, 1st, 1st mo, 1854.

MY DEAR FRIEND, MARY RUSSELL MITFORD,

Permit me to wish thee a happy New Year! I am quite sure that thousands who have been made happier by thy writings will join with me. I wish thou wouldst come over to America, just to see what a host of friends thou hast made for thyself on this side of the water.

I should long before have answered thy kind note, but for the lassitude and disquiet of illness, which often for weeks together make writing of any kind painful and difficult. I spent the latter part of the

summer in the wild hill country of New Hampshire, and think I am still all the better for the inspiring scenery and pure mountain air. At any rate, I can again use my pen, and write newspaper articles for the *National Era*, and now and then I indulge in a jingle of song, a specimen of which I enclose to thee, which has never been published. I know the *subject* will commend it to thee.

I also enclose two short poems, commemorative of my sojourn in the hill-country. As a specimen of the quieter mood of a rough reformer and controversialist, they may not be wholly without interest.

Our excellent friend, James Fields, announces two books of thine as forthcoming. Shall we have a new series of the 'Literary Reminiscences?'

A little volume of poems, under the title of 'Passion Flowers,' by Julia Howe,[1] wife of Dr. Howe of Boston, is attracting much attention. I hope thou wilt see it. Ticknor and Fields publish it. It seems to me to have great merit.

My friend Dr. Holmes is lecturing this winter on the English poets—very witty and genial.

We have recently had a delightful visit from Ralph Waldo Emerson. I wish thou wouldst meet him. He is a man not only admired, but *loved*.

I need not tell thee that I should be exceedingly glad to hear from thee. Thy two notes are among my choice treasures.

Believe me, most cordially thy friend,

JOHN G. WHITTIER.

[1] Mrs. Julia Ward Howe wrote several poems of considerable merit. Dr. Howe was a celebrated philanthropist.

MR. J. RUSKIN *to* MISS MITFORD.

Saturday Evening, April 22, 1854.

DEAR MISS MITFORD,

I have just finished 'Atherton,' to my great regret, thinking it one of the sweetest things you have ever written, and receiving from it the same kind of refreshment which I do from lying on the grass in spring. My father and mother, and an old friend and I, were talking it over to-day at dinner, and we were agreed that there was an indescribable character about it, in common with all your works—an indescribable perfume and sweetness, as of lily of the valley and honey, utterly unattained by any other writer, be it who he or she may.

I perhaps feel it the more from having read very little lately, except of old books, hardly any poetry even among *them*, but much of dry history. I do not mean *dull* by dry, but dry in the sense of faded leaves, the scent and taste of it being as of frankincense instead of the fresh honey. I am sure that your writings will remain the type of this peculiar character of thought. They have the playfulness and purity of the 'Vicar of Wakefield,' without the naughtiness of its occasional wit, or the dust of the world's great road on the other side the hedge, as it always is there. I don't know where one can get a PERFECTLY innocent laugh, except with you. All other laughing that I know of, even the best, is either a *little* foolish, and therefore wrong, or a *little* malicious, and therefore wrong too. But I think my five-minutes-long laugh over Jacob Stokes 'passing

the greater part of his time in the air which was not spent in the water,' was absolutely guiltless and delicious, as well as another, softened by a little pity for the hedgehog, over Marigold's behaviour to that incomprehensible animal. Landseer has done much for dogs, but not so much as you.

I have not read the succeeding volumes yet. I keep them literally for cordials—the most happy and healing when one is weary. I suppose it is because such thoughts are always floating in your mind that you yourself can bear so much, and yet be happy.

April 23rd.—I have had one other feast, however, this Sunday morning in your dear friend's poems—Elizabeth Browning. I have not had my eyes so often wet for these five years. I had no conception of her power before. I can't tell you how wonderful I think them. I have been reading the 'Valediction,' and the 'Years Spinning,' and the 'Reed,' and the 'Dead Pan,' and 'Dead Baby at Florence,' and the 'Caterina to Camoens,' and all for the first time! I only knew her mystical things—younger, I suppose—before.

Tuesday.—I kept this to put another sheet, but can't keep it longer.

Yours gratefully,

J. RUSKIN.

MR. TOM TAYLOR *to* MISS MITFORD.

General Board of Health,
June 29, 1854.

MY DEAR MADAM,

Your letters, which were preserved in the journals, are still in the volumes where I found them, and

I have neither the originals nor copies of them. I did, however, in my editorial capacity, read them with a view to see if they threw light on matters it might be important to know for my purposes. They increased, if that be possible, my respect for their writer, for they reflected in every turn the kindness and geniality which your published works so abundantly reveal.

'Our Village' is one of the books I have read with most pleasure, and I take most pleasure in remembering. I am sure, had we been contemporaries, we should have been friends. As it is, you have no truer admirer . . . . . I regret deeply to hear that your health is so shattered, and I trust that this letter will relieve you from any anxiety that might add to the sufferings of illness on the subject of your letters to Haydon. You would yourself, I think, be astonished to find how little they reveal of that 'irritability,' which, if it be the characteristic of any class of imaginative writers, should be, above all, that of writers for the stage, as I know by experience.

Your utterances were, above all, womanly and kind, and I do not suppose, even had you seen the letters with the notion that they were to be published, you would have found many lines to blot.

Believe me, dear madam,
With the deepest sympathy and respect,
Most sincerely yours,
TOM TAYLOR.

The family wished Miss Mitford to edit 'Haydon's Life,' but she excused herself as not being sufficiently

conversant with the artistic world. She afterwards considered that Mr. Taylor had 'done it admirably,' and says, 'I suppose there is not in English literature a young man so truly admirable, in mind and conduct.'

J. RUSKIN *to* MISS MITFORD.

Geneva, July 29, 1854.

MY DEAR MISS MITFORD,

I merely write a single line to tell you how glad I am to hear from your letter to my father that the dramatic works will so soon be published. I am very curious to see them, and I am sure by what you say of them that they will be a delight to us all; also, in my peculiar disposition to general quarrelsomeness with the *public*, I begin to put my feathers up, like a fighting cock, in the hope of discovering something especially good which the public have not yet acknowledged. I am sure that what has so much of your own feelings in the woof of it must be *good* in the abstract; but whether good as a *play* is another matter. I wish it was more the custom to write in a dramatic form without that subduing, and chiselling, and decorating down to the dimensions, and up to the sparkle, which is needed for the stage patience and the footlights. I have met with *one* example of this kind of writing which has delighted me beyond measure. You know everything that ever was written, I believe, but in case by accident almost inconceivable you should *not* know Octave Feuillet's 'Scenes et Proverbes,' I have ordered my bookseller to send it to you instantly, thinking that perhaps you

might be refreshed, even in your present time of extreme pain, by the exceeding sweetness of 'La Clef d'Or.' There is something exceedingly like your own thoughts—and what can I say more?—in one of the scenes of it—that between Suzanne and her babe at the bridge, and between her and her husband when she leaves him settling the accounts of the estate with what he thinks a 'flash of *triomphe diabolique*' in her eyes. 'Redemption' is also a fine thing, but perhaps a little too painful and exciting for you just now.

I do not want to lose this post and must say good-bye. You do not know how much you have done for me in showing me how calamity may be borne.

Ever most respectfully and affectionately yours,

J. RUSKIN.

The following unsigned letter is in the beautifully distinct handwriting of Bayard Taylor.

BAYARD TAYLOR *to* MISS MITFORD.

Boston, August 1, 1854.

MY DEAR MISS MITFORD,

This morning our kind friend Mr. Fields left at my house your precious little note, which both delighted and pained me.

To know that you are suffering who have done so much to mitigate the sorrows of others, to think that we sit under our elms at Sudbury, charming away the swift summer hours with 'Atherton' and the other tales that 'hang thereby,' while you, who should be with us to see what happy faces you create three or

four thousand miles away from Swallowfield, are lying in anguish on your sick-bed—this made me unhappy, and I wished myself in England that I might be near you and do personally what I can only poorly do with my pen,—that I might express to you by attention and my cheerful service, how much I feel for you, and what pleasure it would give me to add my own mite to the friendly offices which we must all need sooner or later.

It must be a great consolation to you in your illness that you are *at home in England*, with its wealth of comfort, with all the appliances that soothe the hour of sickness, and among all the abundant kindness native to the English heart. Whatever may have been written or said of Italian sunshine, or the genial air of Provençe or Andalusia, England is the best country to be an invalid in. Often have I thought amid the most smiling scenes of southern Europe what a wretched thing it must be to depend on the casual or purchased kindness, and the imperfect household arrangements say of Rome, or Nice, or Naples; how much in those or similar places the poor patient must miss the thousand comforts of an English home! And then again it seems to me that the out-of-door and haphazard way of life among those people of the south unfits them to be good nurses. Who could expect in their cold, cheerless palaces, with all their finery and poor furniture, their pictures and brick-paved floors, who could expect the nice beds, the neat service, the noiseless motion of your English domestics? I feel quite sure that there is ne'er a noble house from Turin to Palermo that con-

tains as many means and contrivances to relieve the tedium of a long illness as your own room at Swallowfield.

May I tell you a pleasant little incident in which you are concerned that happened to me a week or two since? At an agreeable place in the country, Sudbury, some twenty miles from Boston, where my sisters go to spend the summer and I my *Sundays*, there met us by appointment two or three friends, desirous like ourselves of escaping the noisy patriotism and gunpowder of our national holiday, the 4th of July. Well, we sat under the trees, for it was too hot to walk, and there came the usual question of 'What is there to read?' Now I had carried 'Atherton,' the *presented copy*, for which I have to thank you, and as it was a day or two, by Mr. Fields' kind forethought, in advance of the publication, I kept it back until the others should have told their treasures, intending then, with a little vain-glory and great confidence, to produce my contribution to the literary stock of the company, and 'sair surprise 'em all.' So Nelly showed *her* book, and Fanny *hers*, and then *this* novel was brought out, and then *that*, and, when they asked what I had for them, I answered,

'Something better than any of you can boast; I would not exchange my volume for a library of such as yours.'

'I would not give you *mine* for it,' said a lady, and thereupon a dispute arose.

'Well, end it,' quoth I; 'as you are a lady, you must have the first show, and then you shall see how "a plain tale shall put you down."'

'Let the company judge,' replied my pretty rival, and out came—'Atherton'!

There were so many 'Ohs!' and 'Goodys!' and so much 'How did you get it?' and 'Where did you get it?' that they almost forgot to ask for mine; but, when at last my 'Atherton' came forth, there was a little laugh for the moment, and between the two copies the day went merrily off to the entire exclusion of patriotic crackers. For that very delightful time, my dear Miss Mitford, I must add the thanks of the whole company to my own, and I will leave you to guess who the lady was, for her copy also was a gift from you.

MR. RUSKIN *to* MISS MITFORD.

Denmark Hill, August 7, 1854.

DEAR MISS MITFORD,

I could not answer your kind note when I received it, being fairly laid up at the time in pillows and coverlets, and I am now just leaving home again, and have many things to arrange before half-past ten (it being now half-past seven), so that I have but time to pack, I hope safely, these two flowers, the rananculus, the hardiest and highest (and most scornful of all common flower comforts, such as warmth, fellowship, or good entertainment in the way of board and lodging) of all Alpine plants; a loose stone or two, and a drop of dirty ice-water being all it wants; and the *soldanella*, of which the enclosed little group is a fair specimen, which is equally distinguished for its hurry to be up in the spring. I shall be happy in thinking that my poor pets, in my exile,

have at least the consolation of some share in Miss Mitford's regard. I was delighted to hear of your most enjoyable little trip. I have sent this, however, for safety to Reading. I trust you will now have better weather than hitherto.

I am going to take your advice, and try France for a week or two. My wife desires her most sincere regards (best thanks from me for your kind expressions towards her), and my mother and father beg to join theirs.

Ever, my dear madam,

Believe me faithfully and respectfully yours,

J. RUSKIN.

DEAN MILMAN *to* MISS MITFORD.

Caulew, Penryn, Cornwall, August 19, 1854.

MY DEAR MISS MITFORD,

Your pleasant note has been forwarded to me here; the volume of plays awaits me on my return home, when I shall hope to renew my acquaintance with some old friends, and make some agreeable new ones. I beg you to accept my warm thanks for both.

I speak of your note as pleasant from its calm and Christian love, though I could wish that it gave a better account of your health. You have indeed many, I trust, the best consolations. One, I am sure, you may have—the satisfaction of having for many years given great and blameless pleasure to many readers. You have done great service in your day by awakening a sense of the exquisite beauties of our home scenery, and the delights of quiet rural life.

That is what so many may enjoy, if they will enjoy it; and you have taught them how to do so.

I write of those compositions which are peculiarly your own, without disparaging your higher flights, where you have many rivals. You have done what is allowed to few, struck into a path of your own, and that a very delightful and, in its best sense, very useful one.

I cannot help expressing my friendly wish, and in all this I speak in Mrs. Milman's name as well as my own, for your restoration to some comfort and enjoyment; if it is determined otherwise, you have our earnest good wishes and prayers for better things.

I have heard of you from time to time from our dear friend Harness—a friend indeed to all whom he loves. May I beg you also to remember us very kindly to Lady Russell?

Believe me, my dear Miss Mitford, with sincere respect and regard,

Faithfully yours,
H. H. MILMAN.

P.S.—We are on our summer holidays in the west, and hope to see the Land's End next week.

BAYARD TAYLOR *to* MISS MITFORD.

New York, September 15, 1854.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

I can scarcely say how much I thank you for your letter, which reached me yesterday. I know how much it must have cost you to write at all, and, if this should not find your health improved, I hope

you will not feel bound to exhaust your strength by replying to it. I will still hope that you may be spared to your friends for summers to come, but, if this should not be, the cheerfulness with which you anticipate the great change will sweeten its approach.

I wish I could say something that could cheer the weariness of your illness; but what can I write, except what you must already know—that you have many true friends on this side of the ocean; that many whom you have never seen think of you with esteem and affection, and that their warmest sympathy is with you in your afflictions. If I should never see you again, it will be a happiness to remember that I have seen and known you in your house at Swallowfield. Shall I ever forget that stormy afternoon I passed in your little library? I then hoped that our meeting was but the commencement of an intercourse which I knew I should value the more the longer it existed; for I looked forward then, as now, to visiting England frequently. Your kindness to a rough stranger like myself made me at once your friend, and I shall never think of you otherwise, my dear Miss Mitford, than with the sincerest friendship and esteem. Stoddard and I speak of you often and involuntarily, as an old and tried friend—so near and familiar the thought of you has become. You will still live thus in our memories when you shall have left the world, in which we must struggle a little while longer.

My work on Africa will be published in a few days, and I will send you a copy by the first opportunity. It may serve to divert the tedium of your imprison-

ment. I have tried to fix the sunshine of the East on its pages, and perhaps a little may be reflected into the glooms of your English October. It promises to be very successful here, six or seven thousand copies having been ordered before publication. I am busily engaged upon another, to be called, 'The Lands of the Saracen,' embracing my travels in Syria, Asia Minor, Sicily, and Spain. Three volumes in one season. You see I am not idle, although I work somewhat against my will, for the old Oriental indolence returns now and then.

I am glad you like the idea of the Oriental poems. It remains to be seen whether they will be recognized as successful. A poetical fame is usually of slow growth, and circumstances have obliged me to throw my prose in the way of my poetry. I know perfectly well, however, that literary fame must be *waited for*, not sought; that, if I deserve it, I shall surely get it, and, if I don't deserve it, I ought not to wish it.

I have seen nearly all our authors this summer—Irving, Longfellow, Lowell, Holmes, Willis, and Bryant—but they are idling at present. Stoddard and I are working side by side, and trying to keep our early vows. There is happiness in the labour, and we are cheerful and hopeful. Heaven grant, my dear friend, that we may be as fortunate as you when the time comes for us to cease working—that we may look back on our successful achievements, and be surrounded by as many and as faithful friends!

But I fear lest it may tire you to read as well as to write, and that I may be making my letter too

long. I will write again soon, if I can say anything to interest you. God bless you!

Ever faithfully,

Your friend,

BAYARD TAYLOR.

Bayard Taylor, the well-known, pleasant, and prolific American author, was a most enterprising traveller. His earlier journeys were accompanied 'with knapsack and staff,' and perhaps one of his most remarkable feats was that of travelling over Europe for two years at an expense of only a hundred pounds. The work above alluded to is 'A Journey to Central Africa, or Life and Landscape from Egypt to the Negro Kingdom of the White Nile.' He spent a day with Miss Mitford at Swallowfield in 1852.

CHAPTER IX.

MR. DIGBY STARKEY—CRITIQUES BY MISS EDGEWORTH—LETTERS FROM DIGBY STARKEY, CARLETON, ELIOT WARBURTON AND LORD ST. GERMANS—PROPOSED HISTORICAL WORK—DEATH OF ELIOT WARBURTON.

ONE of those literary friends whom Miss Mitford valued, but had never seen personally, was Mr. Digby Starkey. He was Accountant-General in Dublin, and relieved the monotony of his official duties by amateur authorship. He first contributed some short articles to Chambers' series, and afterwards wrote 'Anastasia,' 'The Dole of Malaga,' 'Tom Twiller—a Romance,' 'Theoria,' and a dramatic poem, bearing the somewhat unpromising title of 'Judas.'[1] He also wrote reviews in the *Dublin University Magazine.*

Miss Mitford considered him to be a gifted man, and told a friend that 'he was said to be one of the pleasantest men in Dublin,' and also that 'he was

[1] The following collection of letters, made by him and Miss Jephson, were forwarded to me for publication by Mr. Starkey shortly before his death.

a favourite correspondent of Maria Edgeworth, and, having lived in literary widowerhood since her death, has adopted me as a sort of second wife, a very unworthy one.'

Mr. Starkey's acquaintance with Miss Edgeworth seems to have been due to his sister-in-law, Miss Jephson, who was the only person out of her own family whom Maria Edgeworth educated, and who was also one of Miss Mitford's oldest and dearest friends. At Miss Jephson's suggestion he sent Miss Edgeworth a copy of his 'Judas,' hoping it would meet with her approval, and in the note accompanying the volume he says, 'If, as an author, I could suggest a claim to your notice, it could only be found in the circumstance of my being an Irishman and hazarding the publication of a literary work in Ireland, both of which, while they are discouraging to my hopes of success with the public, I venture to think may obtain the indulgence of one whose labours have been so eminently patriotic; and who, in advancing the interests and elevating the literature of her country, is not ashamed of receiving back a reflected lustre from the land she herself so enlightens and adorns.'

Miss Edgeworth's critique in reply exhibits her character in an amiable light. She always desired to take an optimist view and to praise wherever it was admissible. Experience had taught her what a loving regard an author has for his work, and, as she probably doubted whether Mr. Starkey would reap any pecuniary reward, her warm heart prompted her to say something that might be some kind of recompense.

She wrote as follows:—

Rev. R. Butler's, March 25, 1843.

Mr. Starkey has too much reason to be surprised and offended by my long delay of acknowledgments and thanks for his flattering note and valuable present. But I am just recovering from a severe illness, and till within these few days have not been able to give so much attention to reading as his book demands.

In truth, I was quite overwhelmed by your overestimate, sir, of my opinion. I never was in the habit of reading with a view to criticize; but, on the contrary, always for my own pleasure and advantage lent myself completely to my author to be instructed or amused, or, if in poetry, to be hurried and transported hither and thither at the will and power of his genius. In the present case I am, from my want—my total want of learning or information upon the subjects of which you treat, peculiarly disqualified for giving you any assistance by my remarks or criticism . . . .

So far as I can judge by the impressions made on myself by many passages in your poem, it is impossible to doubt your claims to high poetic merit, and to that highest kind, the test of genius, *invention*—invention both of new character and of new and appropriate thought, feeling, and incident. The character of Chevah is admirably conceived and ably developed for your main purpose in this drama. I know not of any dramatic incident finer than that

of the blind father of Chevah being restored to sight. The scene where he meets his daughter and pours out to her his joy, gratitude, and love for his Saviour, without being aware that he is striking her fatally with remorse and despair, is one of the most beautiful and touching I ever read. Her swooning at her father's feet without a word at the close of his speech is beyond all words eloquent—the best timed and best *motived* swoon I ever saw or heard of in poetry or prose. In general I am not fond of swooning, but this of Chevah's commands my pity, and though she is but one of the frail daughters of her namesake, and not quite as good as she should be, yet you have drawn her so as to shield her from disgust, and to make her appear sufficiently attractive in her struggles between virtue and vice, and in her infirmity of passion and weakness just to answer well your dramatic purpose.

The introduction of love, as a temptation, a motive for Judas to raise him above a mere thief in the first place, as we had always been taught to consider him, was certainly a bold measure. How far justified by Scriptural authority or suggestion we are not bound—at least, I am not called upon—to examine, disdaining as I most justly and honestly do all intention or power of learned, much more of Biblical, criticism.

The moral effect assuredly as well as the dramatic is *good*—the struggles of remorse, the tortures of conscience, are always moral and salutary for human creatures to behold and believe in. And this drama has powerfully exhibited them, and impressed their

reality in the whole character and life and death of Judas. The speech of Satan—'What is hell?' is the finest in your whole drama—sublime! I am sorry you distracted the attention from it and weakened its effect by those horrid prolonged howlings, and songs, and sayings of the inferior demons—however meant as personifications of evil conscience, they stay too long and talk too much. Length is a fatal enemy to the sublime.'

But while thus encouraging the poet, and expressing her admiration for some portions of his work, she cannot conceal her astonishment at the subject he has chosen.

'Why you took Judas under your protection, and made him your hero, I cannot conceive; or why you set yourself such a task beset with difficulties, of which you were so fully aware—as your thirty pages of the detail of these difficulties in your Introduction and your notes prove—I cannot imagine, and, fortunately, it is out of my province to inquire.'

Mr. Starkey, in his reply to this letter, gives his reasons for selecting the subject.

'As to the question why I took Judas under my protection, I have an answer—because no one else would have anything to do with him.[1] It is my constitution and temper to be moved with pity when I

[1] Mr. Horne afterwards wrote a miracle-play called 'Judas Iscariot,' with a similar desire of extenuating his guilt.

observe anyone the object of general outcry. I cannot conceive any fellow-mortal being utterly beyond the pale of human sympathy . . . . I could not shut my door upon him when all the world was against him, and he knocked so loud that I was forced to let him in at last.' He adds in another place: 'Wordsworth, in writing to me, did not hesitate to express his want of sympathy with the story and the personages.'

In 1847 Mr. Starkey had Miss Edgeworth's permission to dedicate to her a volume of minor poems. She sends him her opinion of these in the following words:—

MISS EDGEWORTH *to* MR. STARKEY.

Edgeworthstown, May 11, 1847.

MY DEAR SIR,

I feel my name highly honoured by being prefixed to a collection of poems in which there is so much originality and poetic power—in one word, *genius*—

> 'Let me be seen! could I that wish obtain,
> All other wishes my own power would gain,'

is a stanza which is put into the mouth of a beauty. A man of your talent has only to feel—let me be known!

Your volume is very well printed, and does credit to your Irish publisher, yet I own that I wish it had appeared in London, to catch the English public eye. I also wish it had another title. 'Theoria' is not attractive either to learned or unlearned. But this is

all the fault I can find, and it may be a mere caprice of my own. I wish you would send me another copy of your book to Hatch Street for me, with these words written in the title-page—

To Sir John Herschel, Bart.,
From the Author, at the request of
Maria Edgeworth.

I will send up a letter to go with it.

I consider Sir J. Herschel, *though* a philosopher, to be a man of the most enlarged mind and highest genius of any of the many men of abilities with whom I have the pleasure and honour to be acquainted, and I may count him, indeed, as among my friends. I love to give him pleasure, and I know I shall give him much in introducing your book to him.

The poems were read to me by one who can appreciate and do them full justice, and I had exquisite enjoyment in several of them. 'The Bankrupt' she could scarcely read or I hear without tears—so pathetic, so full and short. The song of 'The Pen' is highly poetical and original, so is 'Vocal Memnon.' The 'Poplin Weaver' is beautiful. Look in the Manchester Society's paper (published ages ago), third volume, as well as I recollect—there is a most interesting case in point, not poetical, but true, which would show you and prove to others that your poetic painting is true to Nature, and modestly coloured—not so deep a colour as these depicted from reality.

I do not like your translations or imitations from the German so well as your originals, and I beg you

not to imitate *German* poetry, for I think you have already quite as much of German genius and sentiment in you as is good for you. Every man of genius should be careful not to

'Leap his fine courser o'er the bounds of taste,'

and you would not learn that sort of discretion from Germans. I am afraid I shall sink in your opinion by this observation, but, sink or swim, I must be sincere.

Your 'Words for Music,' addressed to a lady going to have her portrait taken, are beautiful, so are your 'Sighs and Tears.' You have infinite variety in your powers of poetry, and can adopt any style you choose, from Milton to Etherege, Sir W. Raleigh, or Marlowe. But keep your own through all, and believe me very sincerely your obliged and grateful, and truly admiring and severely judging reader,

MARIA EDGEWORTH.

Digby Starkey's action on behalf of Carleton was worthy of all commendation, prompted as it was by the spectacle of a man of talent struggling with the direst poverty. As many persons may not be familiar with the name of this author, I may mention that he was a voluminous novel-writer in the middle of this century. The son of a small farmer living at Clogher in the county of Tyrone, his first attempts were short stories of Irish peasant life, of weddings, wakes, courtships, and faction fights. Those who are fond of studying the early stages of society will mark in these pages many primitive customs and ancient superstí-

tions, while the narrative sparkles with quaint humour, and occasionally affords us glimpses of wild and romantic scenery. Carleton in his youth had a strong literary bias, and, although educated for the priesthood, gave up the prospects of competence which it offered, and went up to Dublin with half a crown in his pocket to be one of the hard-worked and ill-paid votaries of the muses. He wrote 'Fardonougha, the Miser,' 'The Fawn of Spring Vale,' 'Valentine M'Clutchy, the Agent,' 'The Black Prophet,' 'The Squanders of Castle Square,' and many others. As he moved more in town society, the tone of his writings altered; they lost their original simplicity, and become political. The famine years accelerated the change, and he now began to portray the tenant as an oppressed man, and to paint the landlord as a drunken profligate. He gives the latter the name of Topertoe, and says that he cared as much for a tenant as for a horse or a dog, 'a circumstance which we daresay several of our modern landlords, both resident and absentee, will consider as, on our part, a good-humoured stretch of fiction.' But it must be admitted that this was part of the strong colouring which the novelist generally adopted, and that, if he represented the landlord as often harsh and extravagant, he added that the tenant was often improvident and dishonest; if he depicted one nobleman as vicious, he contrasted him with another who was refined and honourable.

The persons whom he especially singled out for reprobation were the middlemen and the sub-agents, who themselves belonged to the farming class. His

impartiality was so great that, though a Romanist, he occasionally denounced the priests, who, he says, 'took more trouble about elections than about preparing their flocks for heaven.' 'No priest of any creed,' he maintains, 'should be suffered, unless at the expense of his ears, to take part in, or appear upon the hustings at an election; he has no right to deliver inflammatory speeches to an ignorant and excitable rabble. There is no greater curse to Ireland than a political firebrand.' In his preface to the 'Tithe Proctor' he writes: 'I have myself been a strong anti-Repealer during my whole life, and, though some of the Young Irelanders are my personal friends, yet none know better than they that I was strenuously opposed to their principles, and have often endeavoured to dissuade them from the madness of their undertaking.'

Speaking of the Tithe War he says: 'The people as they always are, and we fear for ever will be, were mere instruments in the hands of a host of lay and clerical agitators, and no argument was left unattempted or unurged to hound them on to the destruction of the Establishment. The virtues of passive resistance were inculcated and preached.' These words viewed by later lights seem almost prophetic!

The following letter was written by Mr. Starkey on behalf of Carleton:—

MR. STARKEY *to* MISS EDGEWORTH.

Dublin, July 6, 1847.

MY DEAR MISS EDGEWORTH,

By a strange coincidence I received from Mr.

Carleton, on the very day on which your valuable letter reached me, a note in which he urged upon me the execution of the task I had undertaken for him—to procure, if possible, 'the honoured and great name of Maria Edgeworth' to his memorial. He had in fact become apprehensive that I might have forgotten him or you, neither of which circumstances were likely to happen.

I have not yet seen him to read to him the invaluable testimonial you have so generously written for him, which must produce the most powerful effect with the Government, if you allow me to make use of it by sending it to Lord John Russell.

I am disposed to think that the pension list for the present may be full, from the fact of two considerable annuities having been lately granted, one to the excellent Father Matthew, the other to the family of the late Dr. Chalmers; but Carleton's claim, urged and backed as it now is, cannot ultimately be overlooked.

Your exertions for the circulation of my little volume excite my gratitude in no small degree. Sir John Herschel's literary qualifications had been already known to me through our common friend Sir William Hamilton, to whom I have addressed one of my sonnets in 'Theoria,' having reference to two sonnets of his (Sir W. H.'s) written at Sir J. Herschel's residence in England. Of his fame as a philosopher the whole world is cognizant. These two men were together last week at Oxford . . .

MR. STARKEY *to* MISS EDGEWORTH.

July 16, 1847.

MY DEAR MISS EDGEWORTH,

I beg to send you the memorial on behalf of Mr. Carleton, which it is his ardent wish you should sign . . .

I never saw so strong an impression of gratified feeling in my life in *anyone* as he evinced on my reading to him your letter. He really could not find words to convey his emotions, and at last declared that he was sufficiently repaid for all the trials and troubles which had made him an author.

What an enviable power your genius gives you of administering delight! When I saw poor Carleton's face glowing with pride and exultation, I felt that the triumph was yours, and of no ordinary degree.

In October 1847 Miss Edgeworth had consented to be godmother to Mr. Starkey's son, and he wrote her as follows upon this occasion :—

MR. STARKEY *to* MISS EDGEWORTH.

Four Courts, Dublin, October 28, 1847.

MY DEAR MISS EDGEWORTH,

The truly kind and flattering way in which you have accepted the office of sponsor to our little boy has enhanced the honour you have done us by consenting to our wishes, and my best wish for my son is that he may prove in life worthy of the great name designed for him.

Your message to your *gossip*, the Attorney-General, I delivered to him, and he begs leave through me to express the gratification he feels in making such an

acquaintance. I have gone beyond your instructions, and delivered a similar message to your other gossip, Mr. Mackinnon, a connection of ours, and an admirer, as well as a cultivator, of literature. You will find honourable mention of him in Lockhart's 'Life of Sir Walter Scott,' he (Sir W.) having met him in the Hebrides many years ago, on *his own* island of Skye. Mr. Mackinnon is now classed amongst the 'literary legislators' of the day, and his works on public opinion and civilization certainly entitle him to the former part of the description, though I think his efforts for the establishment of certain economic reforms are the truest grounds of his fame. I must transcribe a portion of his letter—'I feel proud of being placed in juxtaposition with such names as the Attorney-General of Ireland and Miss Edgeworth, to whom I beg you will offer my best compliments and acknowledgments. I will seize the opportunity of the introduction you have mutually given to call upon both my co-sponsors whenever I hear they are likely to be in town.'

This I know to be no idle compliment; at his hospitable mansion in Hyde Park Place I have met many distinguished persons: Miss Porter, Lady Cork, Disraeli, Miss Pardoe, &c.

Let me now say a word about the letter you so kindly transcribed for me from that great man, Sir J. Herschel. It came upon me by surprise. I scarcely thought that one so taxed as to every moment of time could or would have found leisure to speak of 'Theoria.' . . . My reward is renewed every time I hear that a man like this has felt what I have written. And, as to Sir J. H.'s poetical abilities, I

had heard enough from my friend Sir W. Hamilton to satisfy me of his powers both of judgment and performance.

The next letter, dated June 26, 1848, is on the same subject.

MR. STARKEY *to* MISS EDGEWORTH.

MY DEAR MISS EDGEWORTH,

Our exertions have been successful, and Carleton is on the pension list for £200 a year. I hope and believe that he feels as I do that his good fortune is in a great measure due to *your* strong and generous advocacy of his claims both in the body of the memorial and in the letter to me which accompanied the memorial to Lord John Russell.

I must confess, when I found Carleton's name published as that of a feuilletoniste in the *Irish Tribune*,[1] I gave him up for lost. This paper is only second to the *Irish Felon* in anti-English spirit, and I feared that Lord Clarendon might insist on connecting Carleton with the politics of the paper. Under this apprehension, I wrote to Lord C——, and represented to him not only the helpless state in which an author who writes for bread is placed when that bread is held out by a 'felon' on one hand and refused by the loyal subject on the other, but also the importance of detaching a writer of Carleton's powers, who can affect the middle classes so widely, from a connection which would necessitate the application of those powers to

[1] A national or Fenian newspaper. It only lived through five numbers, and Carleton only wrote in it three chapters of 'The Evil Eye,' which was not a political story.

a dangerous purpose, and of rendering him first independent to follow the bent of his own inclinations, and secondly, inclined, from the generosity of his own nature and the liberality of government, to employ his pen in the illustration of the social virtues and the cause of order.

The result was as I have told you; Lord Clarendon at once forwarded Mr. Carleton's case to Lord John Russell (this was about three weeks ago), rather a reminder of the memorial than anything else, and on Friday last arrived a letter announcing the glad tidings. Next day a letter from Lord John Russell conveyed the same intelligence in a highly flattering way; this day Carleton has had a cordial shake of the hand from Lord Clarendon; and this day, too, comes the news that the ministry are out!

Mr. Starkey afterwards wrote political works under the pseudonym of Menenius, and sent one of them anonymously to Miss Edgeworth, who in acknowledgment of it wrote:—

MISS EDGEWORTH *to* MR. STARKEY.

Edgeworthstone, January 9, 1849.

ADMIRABLE MENENIUS,

I thank you for sending me your 'Luck and Loyalty,'—a catching title, but it needs no title. Its own merit will fix and hold its station in our permanent literature—fine literature and moral literature fit for the highest, and yet adapted to the comprehension of the least cultivated in the land.

The queen and her lamp and her lattice will in full

light outlive, outshine, and bear comparison unimpaired with Burke's 'brightest vision that ever lighted upon earth.'

As much has been said as possible of the example of France to deter from disloyalty, anarchy, and national ruin. Now, if ever, let nations learn by experience—if ever people, individually or collectively, did learn by experience of others, it must be when brought home so close and warm to their own consciences and bosoms.

I rejoice that Menenius resolves to write no more under that name. He has not only that which has been called the greatest art, 'the art to blot,' but the still more difficult one, the art, the power to stop, and to stop to rest, self-sustained, on the pleasurable pre-eminence with head cool and heart warm.

Miss Mitford had from her early youth read Miss Edgeworth's works, and she thought that authoress had done more good to the world than any writer since the day of Addison. 'She shoots at folly as it flies, and seldom misses her aim.' The tiresome parts of her works she attributed to her 'prosing father.' Miss Mitford was never acquainted with her, but she once met her at an assembly, and thought her the smallest woman she ever saw. She often heard of her through Mrs. Hofland, who corresponded with both authoresses.

Another remarkable person who read and admired 'Menenius's' writings was Eliot Warburton. This gifted author was at the time contemplating the production of a work upon Ireland, and he conceived

that 'Menenius' could render him efficient assistance; accordingly he wrote:—

ELIOT WARBURTON *to* MR. STARKEY.

Rhwlas, Machwylleth, North Wales,
July 11, 1850.

SIR,

I presume to identify you with the author of an anonymous publication. 'A light that is set upon a hill cannot be hid,' and I do not scruple to say that you have thrown more light, and truer light, on the actual position of your country than any of her sons have ever done—at least in my humble opinion.

Having read the tracts of 'Menenius' with cordial admiration, and, I hope, with appreciation, I desire very much to be known to their author. If it be a liberty I am taking in thus addressing him, I at least prove my belief in his worth by the confidence I venture to place in him.

I have some intention of embarking in a literary undertaking connected with the history of Ireland, in which I should greatly desire to have the assistance of so able and eloquent (by no means synonymous terms) a writer as 'Menenius.' My views in the above history would, I hope, be patriotic, but (I am an Irish landlord) profit would also be a consideration.

If 'Menenius' will do me the honour to write to me, I will explain myself further.

His very obedient servant,

ELIOT WARBURTON.

Mr. Starkey wrote to express his willingness to co-operate in the proposed work, and Eliot Warbur-

ton, in a second letter, developed his scheme more completely.

ELIOT WARBURTON *to* MR. STARKEY.

Rhwlas, Machwylleth, North Wales,
July 22, 1850.

MY DEAR SIR,

I am very much gratified by the contents and kind tone of your letter, and congratulate myself on having obtained such an ally.

The history of Ireland has not only been *ill*-written, but so *repulsively* written by all those who have attempted the subject that the very title would now be unpopular. At the same time, among the clouds that are clearing away, those from her history should be dispersed, as far as the patriot can do it. I propose a 'Viceregal Dynasty of Ireland—Personal and Historical,' or some such title. I think there is a healthy appetite—though too easily satisfied—in this country for obtaining information, especially when gilded by novelty and originality. From what I already know of the ante-Norman and Plantagenet periods of Ireland's history it appears to me that a picturesque and striking sketch might be made of it—say half an octavo volume, the other half to run up to the deposition of that caitiff, James II. I think I could manage so far with a little assistance.

What I would propose to you would be the continuance to Lord Clarendon's reign. As he is a personal and kind friend of mine, I should like to have a 'turn' at him as to his personal career, which my acquaintance with his family would enable me to do.

You will see that I have left you by far the most arduous part of the work, the post of honour. But, from your peculiar powers, you are far better able to grapple with the difficulties that will beset you. Your manly and nervous style will never be degraded into the pettiness of biography, while you will be able to appreciate and *project* with strong relief what is noble in character and relevant in politics.

I propose two moderate octavo volumes, with portraits of King John and Lord Clarendon as first and last of the mock dynasty, also a map of ante-Norman Ireland, and of Ireland as she now is. Many English readers could more easily follow a narrative of operations in Afghanistan than in Connaught.

There is one matter which I regret. I should have been very glad to have published an Irish work in Ireland, and I can understand that Mr. Hodges has some valuable MSS. But alas! London is the only remunerative market. I have a few valuable MSS. entrusted to me, but of course it is important to obtain as many as possible relating to the Volunteer, the Rebellion, the Union, and the Catholic Emancipation periods.

ELIOT WARBURTON.

In a letter dated July 29, 1850, after further discussing the proposed work, he adds—

'And here I may observe, *en parenthèse*, with regard to politics—I hate the very word—that hereditarily a Tory, and by reading and observation a good deal chastened in that creed, I shall endeavour to

write my part of Ireland in the spirit of the old song—

> "I ask not be ye Whig or Tory,
> For Commonwealth or Right Divine,
> Say, dear to you is England's glory?
> Then—gie's a hand o' thine."

Your own aphorism is more practical, and as expressive of my ambition—"truth in facts, and philosophy in deduction."

'As to unity of style, that is impossible. I think the variety will be acceptable in every way to the reader. You will enter on a new era at a time when history becomes more important and earnest. It is only just to your fame that your style should be perceived and appreciated. I can say but little for myself in other respects, but I can faithfully assert that you will find in me no jealous compeer, nor among your readers a more hearty appreciator.

'I think Macaulay is a better model for us than either Campbell or Strickland. Generally, it cannot be denied that our Viceroys were not men of leading mind, and too often were only shelved into their high power. We must rather reverse the pretty saying—

> "They're the wreath of pearl, and I
> Am but the cord on which they lie."

We may string our history on them, I think, giving such matters, even of the most famous, as may make ours a useful book of reference, and only entering into particulars of such lives as interest the world at large. I think Moore's first volume is very pleasant

reading for a class (of whom I am one), but his last three are—— !'

Warburton concludes this letter by inviting Starkey to pay him a visit in Wales, and adds—

'I hope you are an angler, and that by the 24th prox. we shall have some pretty good salmon-fishing.'

Writing again about their literary project on August 23rd, he says:

'I think we should be sure of full reviews under any circumstances, and as I know most of our Cabinet Ministers, we should have a good chance of being talked about (I mean our book would) among public men and in Parliament, which is the best of puff.'

On the 29th of August, 1850, we find him still expecting Mr. Starkey on a visit. He writes of their work—

'The difficulties you think of *are* difficulties, and such as strike the fire out of flint, and illumine the page that a dull author would leave dark. But of this and all other such things we can talk upon a sunny bench that overlooks the valley of the Dovy. I hope you can smoke a pipe of Latakia.

'You will kindly remember that we are *en bivouac*, and can only offer mountain fare and cottage accommodation.'

On September 16th he writes to acknowledge Starkey's sending him his collection of poems.

'I give you a thousand thanks for your poems, in

my wife's name and my own. I have as yet only glanced at them, and filled a breakfast-table's eyes with the touching stanzas on the "Poplin Weaver." I keep the fuller perusal for a *bonne bouche* for leisure hours, now few and far between.'

In November we find them making slow progress with their 'magnum opus,' to which Warburton says he cannot devote his whole attention. He encloses the following letter from Lord St. Germans:—

LORD ST. GERMANS *to* ELIOT WARBURTON.

Dover Street, November 25, 1850.

MY DEAR MR. WARBURTON,

I received a letter this morning from Lord Braybrooke, from which the following is an extract;

'None of the papers relating to Lord Cornwallis's official connection with Ireland ever came into my hands, nor has anybody been able to tell me what has become of them. The late Lord Sydney seemed to think that Lord Cornwallis was too cautious a man to leave behind him any record of the measures by which the Union was brought about, and always fancied that he had destroyed those papers.

'I had intended to put some questions about them to Sir Edward Littledale (Lord C.'s private secretary), but he died long ago, and before I had any opportunity of applying to him.

'Poor Charles Wynn, who was at the Home Office at the time of the Union, told me that if Lord Cornwallis' papers were extant they would be the most

curious records ever collected. He spoke of those which related to Ireland.'

It is a great disappointment to me to find that the papers in question are not only not in Lord Braybrooke's possession, but that they are probably not even in existence. I had flattered myself that I should be able to procure for you some very valuable materials for your work. I knew that Lord Cornwallis' Indian papers were at Audley End, and I thought that his Irish ones were there also.

Believe me, with best wishes for the success of your undertaking, always

Yours very faithfully.

ST. GERMANS.

Lord St. Germans also wrote expressing his approval of Mr. Starkey's poems which Warburton seems to have sent him.

Unhappily for the authors and the public the proposed history of the Irish Viceroys was not destined to appear. The publishers did not think it would prove remunerative. Colburn wrote to say that he did not consider that the work would be *generally* attractive. 'The Irish, he observes, spend less on books than the Scotch, and English people with few exceptions do not take any real interest in the subject of Ireland.'

When the next letter was written, the undertaking was practically abandoned.

ELIOT WARBURTON *to* MR. STARKEY.

11, Rutland Gate, January, 2, 1851.

MY DEAR STARKEY,

Your letter was a great relief to my mind. It will be a still greater one when I hear that you have mentioned to Lord Clarendon that our joint emprize is for the present at an end. All historic men like to have their times written of by fair and not antagonistic men.

By all means I would have you persevere as you have begun. The modern history of Ireland is still to be written, and *must find* readers.

I wish you were here to dine to-day—Lytton Bulwer and Eothen dine with us.

In May we find Mr. Warburton inviting Mr. Starkey to pay him a visit near Melrose, in Scotland, and on December 15 he writes from the Athenæum—

'I am grieved to hear of your hope deferred, and am gratified by your eloquent *resumé* of American travellabilia. As to the former, if the X is a true man, it must be all right with you. If he be not, the sooner your golden faith is turned into another channel the better.

'My western wanderings are in a most undefined embryoism just now. At all events, I shall not leave England until the end of this year, or the second month of the next.

'It is quite true that the awful array of writers you suggest is before me in the field—but where are they not? "Pereant qui nostra ante nos dixerint!" Thanks,

however, to the illiterateness and bad memory of the world the *ante-dixerints* are not much in the way.

'I came here for the last few days of the Exhibition. Paxton being a friend of mine, I was enabled to see the close of the mighty pageant to-day. It died a Christian's death in prayers and external dreariness.'

Shortly after this Warburton was staying with Bulwer Lytton at Knebworth, and on the 1st of January he wrote a hasty line to say that he was off next day for the West Indies 'for three or four months' cruise.'

He had been selected by the Atlantic and Pacific Junction Company to come to a friendly understanding with the tribes of Indians inhabiting the Isthmus of Darien, and it was his intention also to obtain some information as to the climate, resources, and topography of that region. He accordingly took a passage on board the *Amazon*—a splendid vessel—sister-ship to the *Demara*, which, equally ill-starred, was wrecked in the Avon immediately after she had been launched.

Some of the details of the dreadful sequel may be interesting:

The *Amazon* left her moorings on Friday, January the 2nd. Owing to the heated state of the new engines, the ship was stopped off Portland Bill on Friday night, and again on Saturday. On the latter occasion one of the passengers, a Mr. Nielson, expressed alarm at the heat of the beams near the funnel. He heard that the partition of the grease-room, where tow and tallow were stored, was very hot, and

also the wood near the steam-chest. From this and the screaming of the machinery he concluded that there was some uneven bearing. They were then about a hundred miles beyond Scilly. At a quarter before one on Sunday morning smoke was seen issuing from the hatchway on the foreside of the foremost funnel. The hose was brought to play, but without effect, and shortly afterwards the fire burst forth. The sea was rough, and as the wind was blowing half a gale from the S.W. the flames were driven aft. It was impossible to stop the engines, but some determined men at the helm turned her before the wind, a change which swept off the unfortunate people in the bow.

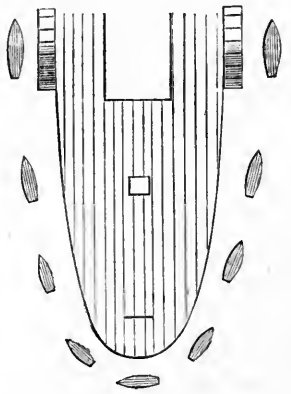
The vessel now flew along at great speed like a sheet of fire, the pinewood crackling with deafening noise. Mr. Kilkelly, one of the survivors, told my friend Mr. Harrison that he had been asleep, and on awaking was surprised to find the cabin empty. He called for the steward, and was told that the ship was on fire. Rushing up the companion through smoke and flame, he gained the deck. The scene was appalling; some were running about screaming, others were on their knees in prayer. Two gentlemen came panting up from the after-cabins all in flames, and fell on the deck. A lady and gentleman in nothing but night-clothes, which were on fire, came up with their arms round each other, and, going to one of the hatches, fell together into the furnace below. Meanwhile, those who were less burnt and more calm tried to avail themselves of the boats. The mail-boat was let down with twenty-five people in her, but was im-

mediately swamped, and all perished. Sixteen men sueeeeded in elearing away with a port lifeboat. One of the starboard lifeboats, in whieh Mr. Nielson was, and another boat, apparently a cutter, which Miss Smith eourageously entered, also got safely off. As the pinnaee was being lowered, a sea struck her and unhooked the bow-taekle; the fore end fell down, and all but two men were precipitated into the sea. Afterwards they righted the boat. This seems to have been that in which Mr. Glennie was saved. Thus four boats out of the nine got off. The flames from the ship made it as light as day, and they could from the boats even see the blisters on the faces of the men on deck. Just at this time a Dutch galliot passed, but sueh was the noise of the fire and of the lashing waves that the crew could not hear the shouts of the men in the port lifeboat, though they took up Miss Smith's and Mr. Glennie's boats. Afterwards the engines of the *Amazon* stopped; at four o'elock, a.m. the masts fell overboard, at five the magazine exploded, scattering the embers to a great distance, and twenty minutes afterwards the ship sank with her funnels red-hot. The two lifeboats were eventually saved, but out of one hundred and sixty-three persons on board the ship one hundred and seventeen perished.

Among the papers sent me by Mr. Starkey I find the following interesting account, written by the Rev. Aeton Warburton soon after the intelligenee of the loss of the *Amazon* arrived, and while the fate of his brother was unknown :—

'This is the way the boats were arranged, and this

the manner in which they were occupied according to the evidence.



'Glennie's evidence is the most reliable. He was perfectly calm, and everything he has stated has been remarkably confirmed by events. Read his letter. When he was dropping down into his boat he saw Eliot, completely dressed, walking towards the starboard sponson lifeboat, which somebody had said was burning; but Glennie is not sure that it was. When Glennie reached the boat the steamer was going fast, and he was swept away about two hundred yards in the space of a minute or two. He then looked again, and saw Eliot had returned, and was standing beside the captain. He says that he was perfectly collected, and his motions indicated self-command, and a power to make any effort for his own safety. Thank God he was seen where we knew he would be, in the place and attitude of the brave! We all

knew that, as long as there was woman or child, or indeed man, to be saved, he would not think of himself.

'Glennie's attention was then directed to his own boat, and when he again looked at the steamer, after the lapse of half an hour, there was nobody on the main deck. . . . He mentioned that he had pulled benches aft for the purpose of making a raft, and he had no doubt the captain and Eliot, if everything else failed, would have made one. I saw two of these benches, which had been picked up off the Lizard Point and brought to London Bridge. They were tied back to back to make a raft. Glennie recognised them as having been on the deck of the *Amazon*, and observed that their having been tied together showed his views were right as to there being time enough to act between the time he left and the period when the deck became untenable. Besides the barque, there were several vessels on the course that day (Sunday) which might have picked them up, and, if heavily insured and outward bound, would not have turned back, as we see in the case of the last people found, who were a day on board a galliot, and obliged to bribe the captain to put back to England.'

Eliot Warburton was last seen standing beside the man at the helm, with his arms folded.

On hearing of this dreadful disaster, Mr. Starkey wrote on the 28th of January to Mr. Colburn:—

Good God, sir! can it be possible? Is our beloved friend, Eliot Warburton, of whom I wrote to you but

yesterday, indeed among the number of the lost in the *Amazon?*

I am scarcely able to write or even to think since hearing even the suspicion of such a calamity.

His repeated and affectionate offers of kindness on my behalf, who am but a comparatively new acquaintance, I could not attempt to enumerate. He addressed me from a distance—asked me to go to him, and acted to me as a brother—having only read some minor publications of mine. I have letters of his, which I treasured as memorials of our intercourse and of his rich generosity even before I knew that I was to consider them as *all* I should have to treasure up.

Oh, that I were a Milton as truly as he was a Lycidas! He should not want an elegy—

'Sunk as he is beneath the watery floor.'

Miss Mitford writes: 'Poor Warburton! I hear much of him from my friend, a neighbour of the Russells, whose eldest son was the R. of the 'Crescent and the Cross.' He is since dead. They speak of Mr. Warburton in the very highest terms.'

CHAPTER X.

MISS JEPHSON—LETTERS FROM MISS JEPHSON AND FROM MISS MITFORD TO MISS JEPHSON AND DIGBY STARKEY.

THE earliest letter that I have seen from Miss Mitford to Miss Jephson is dated 1824, but the tone of it shows that their friendship was not then new. Miss Mitford says that she was one of the most cultivated women that she had ever known, with a sweetness and simplicity of character and charm of mind and manner which made one forget how clever she was. She was twenty-seven in 1829, and Miss Mitford, while disclaiming all desire for match-making, told her old and valued friend, Mr. Harness, that she would make him a good wife. Miss Jephson was a grandniece of Jephson the dramatist, and suggested to Miss Mitford that she should edit and republish his plays, together with his *jeux d'esprit* and letters. When Miss Jephson was staying near her with Lady Sunderland and Miss Malone—the sister of Edmund Malone, the Shakespearian—she found a number of Mr. Jephson's letters among Malone's papers, and among them a few containing an amusing quarrel between Jephson and Horace Walpole.

The first letter from Miss Mitford to Miss Jephson in Mr. Starkey's collection is undated, but seems to have been written in 1831. After referring to her plays, 'Inez de Castro' and 'Charles I.,' she proceeds to pay a tribute of respect to the memory of Mr. Thomas Hope.

'You will see that literature and everybody, above all his friends, have had a great loss in Thomas Hope. He had been very ill, and was getting better, but went out, in an open carriage, in one of those fogs, caught cold, and applied the remedies which an inflammation on the chest rendered necessary. Of all the persons I ever knew, I think he was the most delightful. There was a quick, glancing, delicate wit in his conversation such as I never heard before —it came sparkling in, chequering his grave sense like the sunbeams in a forest. He had also (what all people of any value have) great truth and exactness of observation, and said the wisest things in the simplest manner. Above all, there was about him a little tinge of shyness, a modesty, a real and genuine diffidence, most singular and most charming in a man of his station, his fortune, and his fame. Everybody knows the noble things he used to do— but he was as careful not to give pain as he was earnest to confer happiness, and perhaps this humbler and easier virtue is the rarer of the two. People called him ugly, and a detestable French artist painted him and his wife, as I daresay you have heard, as "La Belle et La Bête." To me he seemed almost handsome. He was very much underhung, which gave a lion-like look to the lower part of his face,

but he had a good Shakesperian pile of forehead, an expression of benevolence and intellect, and the air and bearing of a man of the highest distinction. He was not, I find, so rich as has been thought, in spite of his magnificent house in Duchess Street, the very temple of art, where Mrs. Hope's parties united all that was most distinguished in rank, talent, and literature; and of his still more beautiful villa at Deepdene, where princes of all nations used to take up their abode for weeks together. All was accomplished by the most admirable system of order, a large and liberal economy. He knew to a fraction the expense of every day; nothing ever approached the exactness of his establishment—a strange union with such magnificence and such taste—perhaps the Dutch blood might have some influence. He has two brothers, without children, one of whom has had sixty thousand a year for the last twenty years, and not spent above a few hundreds, so that the children (three sons) will probably be immensely rich. The favourite and loveliest child, his feelings on the loss of whom prompted the last exquisite half volume of "Anastasius," is buried in the graveyard at Deepdene, in a spot consecrated purposely for his mausoleum. I do not know where he himself has been interred. I may probably have told you of him a good deal before, dearest, but it is, I believe, the sort of authentic account of celebrated people which you like to receive. Miss Edgeworth knew him well, but they did not take to each other. He was very kind to me, chiefly because I was an old favourite friend of his favourite friend.

'I am reading the second volume of Moore's "Life of Byron," and I must say that I do think a great deal of it ought to have been omitted.'

Miss Mitford's acquaintance with Mr. Starkey commenced in the winter of 1852. From the following reply it appears that he first wrote to her to express his appreciation of her 'Recollections of a Literary Life' then recently published.

MISS MITFORD *to* MR. STARKEY.

February 9, 1852.

MY DEAR MR. STARKEY,

I cannot address as a stranger one whom in right of dear Emily Jephson, and I will venture to say in his own, I have learnt to regard as a friend. You can hardly fancy how much pleasure your charming letter has given me, not merely from its own kindness to my book, but because it comes to convince me, with other indications of the same nature, that even to such as you that book has been suggestive, has drawn attention to things that have interested me and to writers neglected if not forgotten. Your account of Thomas Davis was peculiarly interesting to me. Nobody can imagine how little he is known in England. Except two or three young barristers, who became acquainted with him through his edition of Curran, I never met with anybody who had even heard the name. I first met with it in Duffy's Irish Library, and have since had frequent messages from a young lady to whom he was engaged, sent to me through a correspondent of hers and mine. I know

no one whose writings, full as they are of youthful fervour, show more maturity than those of Thomas Davis. They are quite free from the imputed national faults. I agree with you that he was spared much evil, though for my own part, looking at the matter merely as an Englishwoman, and therefore ignorantly, I confess I think that Government might have entered into some agreement after sentences by which such men as John Mitchell, and Smith O'Brien, and poor young Meagher might have been allowed to pass their days as exiles in America, instead of languishing as convicts in a penal colony.

With regard to Mr. Praed you are probably right; the very finish and beauty of those trifles was against a higher success. His brother furnished me with a great number of unpublished MSS., chiefly political satires, admirable for point and pleasantry, and more than impartial, since I think the attacks made upon his party were the most numerous. I might have printed them all if I liked since they were put into my hands to work my will with; but, although many perhaps are passed away, one is never sure in such cases of not giving pain in some quarter, and therefore I returned the poems without even taking copies. It is very likely that all he left will be collected and published now, for I see a cheap edition of 'Holcroft's Memoirs' advertised, and I hear of a forthcoming collection of Frere, whose works, long out of print, are scarcely to be obtained by the second-hand booksellers.

The specimen you have sent me of 'Prince' is exquisite. I have commissioned a friend in London

to look for his poems. Did you ever meet with some by a Dorsetshire schoolmaster? I have heard two or three persons speak of them, but I believe they are in that west country *patois* which wants the charm of association that binds me to the Doric of Burns and Motherwell. One of my early favourites was Allan Harvey's 'Gentle Shepherd,' in that I never found the difficulties that beset the early readers of the Waverley novels, or even of Sir Walter Scott's poetry. By-the-way I have looked through scores of volumes without being able to find what Scott calls the best comic ballad in any language—James V.'s 'We'll gae nae mair a-roving.' The 'Gaberlunzie Man' by the same royal author is in 'Percy,' but nowhere can I find its companion. After looking in vain through all the old collections, I sent for Chambers' collection of popular Scottish poems, chiefly comic, but, although there are some curious illustrations of Edinburgh manners towards the end of the last century, there is a lack of what I expected. After all I should have done better to write to William Chambers himself, whom I know well and esteem much.[1] He is one of the best illustrators of self-educated men. His wife told me that for three months, when a lad of eighteen or nineteen, he had set his heart upon a little portable printing press exposed in a broker's window in Edinburgh for the price of eight shillings and ninepence; every night he walked half a mile round to see if the bargain had been caught up by another. Two or three times he had

[1] In the 'Edinburgh Journal' for January 28, 1882, he gives an interesting account of some of his visits to Miss Mitford.

nearly collected the sum, but some imperative claim of want, or duty, or kindness interfered. At last he scraped the money together and became possessed of the treasure. My heart warmed to both wife and husband as they told me this story—lady and gentleman as both are in heart, manner, and acquirements.

Thank you for telling me that story of Byron. Strange that there should be another plagiarism after the wholesale theft of Werner, which could not be unconscious. I am very indulgent towards such borrowings in general, knowing how extraordinary is the manner in which memory and invention are sometimes mixed up, especially where the first faculty is weak. With me it is singularly so, and for years I was tormented by constant fear that every line of tragedy less bad than the next was stolen from my betters. It was a miserable feeling. At last I out-wrote it, but I would not answer for its not reviving now, if I had not, luckily, out-lived the power of writing verse at all.

Forgive this long, straggling letter, dear Mr. Starkey. It will at least prove my reliance upon your indulgence. Do you never come to London? And, if you do, cannot you contrive to give me a day? Many people take a return-ticket, and put up with my homely fare, and spend the afternoon in my poor cottage. One day's notice, to make sure of not missing you, would be plenty.

Ever very faithfully yours,

M. R. MITFORD.

A slip of paper inside this letter contains the following:—

What you say of Leigh Hunt reminds me of a curious circumstance not a little illustrative of the man. I know none of the family, but a friend of mine brought a pretty grand-daughter of his, who had almost wholly lived with him, a girl of sixteen, to pass the day. We took a country walk, and in part of a farm-house Miss Hunt was most astonished and puzzled by an object the most natural and the most familiar. She had never seen a plough! And this was the constant inmate, the favourite grandchild of the lover of Nature! This is what prevents his being a poet, dear Mr. Starkey, not his being ignorant of the commonest rural objects, but his affecting to be familiar with them—in a word, his want of truth. From what I hear, the chief sins of his life have been eternal mendicancy. His prose gives me no pleasure, but the processional power of the story of 'Rimini' is a thing to wonder at. He might have been near to Chaucer, if he had only been true. In your and Milton's, for better words, 'If his life had been a poem.' Casting aside, of course, a far too large part of his works, the greatest living poet seems to me to be Beranger. I know no one who unites such impulse, such finish, and such truth.

MISS JEPHSON[1] *to* DIGBY STARKEY, ESQ.

February 12, 1852.

MY DEAR MR. STARKEY,

Yesterday came one of dear Miss Mitford's closely-written, many-leaved letters, which she begins by

[1] Some of Miss Mitford's letters to Miss Jephson are in the 'Life of Mary Russell Mitford.'

saying, 'how *very*, VERY glad she shall always be to hear from Mr. Starkey.'

Gift-books and letters come every day, pouring in two, three, four at a time, she says, in consequence of her book. Of the books, the most striking is a little volume of poems, bearing the name (not, she believes, the true name) of Mary Maynard—a friend of John Ruskin. Of this book she speaks very highly, and fancies that the assumed name conceals high rank. Besides books and letters, roses arrive, two seedlings called 'Miss Mitford,' and two the 'Swallowfield.' She has, from Hertfordshire nurseries, no less than twelve climbing roses for the front of her house. She says that all the choicest and best English and French roses are raised in Hertfordshire. Last evening, during a drive to Cloyne with Mrs. Halloran, we talked of Miss Mitford's book—and her prize in the lottery reminded Mrs. H. of a marvellous and, I am sure, a true history, which I must tell you. About thirty years ago a Mr. Armstrong, the son of a Presbyterian minister, dreamed three times that he had gained a prize of £20,000 in the lottery, and each time the number of the ticket was revealed to him. After the third dream he felt so certain that he should obtain the prize that he resolved (though very poor at that time) to purchase a ticket, but, knowing that his parents would object to his spending so much money on what would probably prove to be a delusion, he pawned some things of his own, and, wishing not to be known when buying the ticket, he called himself Mr. Johnson, his father's Christian name being John. One doubt troubled

him. He was sure that he had dreamed of the *same* number *two* of the nights, but did not distinctly remember what number he had thought of on the second night. On that night he had slept at an inn, and fearing after his dream that he should forget the number of the ticket, he had risen from his bed, and with a pencil had written on the wall the lucky number. To that inn he resolved to go, half fearing, however, that the figures would be erased. But there he found them, corresponding exactly with those of which he had dreamed before. Now he felt secure; hope changed almost to certainty, and he wrote before the lottery was drawn to his father and to his sisters letters informing them of his good fortune, which were to be put into the post-office when the prize became his own. And the prize did become his—a £20,000 prize—and Mrs. Halloran, then at Cork, and living within a few doors of one of his sisters, saw the letter which announced the good news on the day on which it arrived. This Mr. Armstrong is now living in Dublin, in Eccles Street, and Mrs. Halloran (when I said Miss Mitford should be told the story) said that she would ask her daughter, Mrs. Chatterton, to call on him for further particulars; but I think all that can be interesting is known. Mr. Armstrong settled £100 a year on his parents, and gave each of his sisters £500.

Miss Mitford received a letter the other day from Paris, telling her (on the authority of one of Louis Napoleon's *officiers d'ordonnance*) that it was foretold to him by a black woman of Ham that he should rule over France, should make her great and happy, and

then should be shot in a ball-room. He is said to believe this prediction implicitly.[1]

I transcribe from Miss Mitford's letter. I had asked her who the Princess Mathilde is, of whom the newspaper says that she had on her knees entreated L. N. not to confiscate the Orleans property. *You* know probably that she is Jerome Buonaparte's daughter, married to Count Demidoff. She is said to be the most beautiful woman in France, and exceedingly lively and brilliant, a great favourite of the prince president, who calls her always *la belle cousine*. The most beautiful things in the Great Exhibition (excepting the Tunisian and Indian vases and fabrics), the malachites, come from the estates of Count Demidoff. Another extract from this letter I must give you.

'Madame de Girardin was herself a French poetess of name, Delphine Gay. About eight or ten years ago she wrote a comedy *en cinq actes et en vers*, called "L'Ecole des Journalistes," very clever and tremendously severe. She summoned all the most celebrated authors of Paris, especially the journalists, to read it to them. Jules Janin[2] thereupon wrote a *feuilleton*, giving an account of the sitting, and addressing her as "mon beau confrère." The whole was published, comedy, *feuilleton*, and two or three letters, pro and con, and a most amusing little volume is made.'

[1] The first part of this required no great prophetic power, if accounts are true of the manner in which he was treated by the soldiers when in prison.

[2] The Editor of the *Journal des Débats*.

'Mon beau confrère' to Madame de G. reminds me of a story of Talleyrand which Miss Beddoes told me. In Madame de Staël's novel of 'Delphine,' one of the characters—I forget her name, the friend of 'Delphine'—was supposed, though a woman, to be meant for Talleyrand. On somebody's asking him if he had read the novel, he said, 'Non—on dit que nous y sommes tous les deux déguises en femmes,' meaning Madame de Staël and himself.

Good-bye, dear Mr. Starkey. I am sure you are tired of me, so I will at last take my leave.

Your affectionate scribbling sister,

E. E. JEPHSON,

In the following letter to Miss Jephson, Miss Mitford again refers to her correspondence with Mr. Starkey:

I do not know, my very dear Emily, that I ever received more pleasure than from a most kind and charming letter from that delightful brother-in-law of yours, Mr. Starkey. I had sent off a letter to you the very morning that his arrived, for I am here a mile from our village post-office, and do not, unless upon some un-put-off-able occasion, send oftener than once a day. I lost no time, of course, in thanking him for the kindness which I feel I owe in great measure to your partiality, dear friend, to which I have so often been indebted before. Thank you for liking my book; I continue to receive letter after letter about it.

I have another letter from Mrs. Hoare. I like her; she speaks with the truest feeling of poor Mrs. James

Gray, and has sent me three striking poems of hers.

Mrs. Hoare has sent me a little book of her own writing, called 'Shamrock Leaves,' a painful book, since it deals in details of the years of famine, and tells its story with much apparent truth. One thing she mentions—blue and white and pink harebells growing wild in an orchard. Now I never saw a wild harebell of any colour but blue—did you? I have seen it white when cultivated, but pink never. I wonder whether she confounds it with the wild hyacinth?—inaccurate people sometimes call both harebells, and the wild hyacinth is sometimes found white (although very rarely, and a most beautiful variety it is) and sometimes of an intermediate lavender colour that might be called pink; but there is no answering for that strange, puzzling thing, the colouring matter of flowers. The soil of Ireland may produce pink harebells.

There is an additional leaf enclosed in this letter containing the following:—

Days enough have passed since I wrote the enclosed for me to have received another most charming letter from Mr. Starkey. To-day I received, too, another letter from Mrs. Browning; she has seen George Sand, and is charmed with her. She came to Paris chiefly to solicit the President for a friend of hers. He received her most kindly, shook hands with her, and granted her request. (Those precious newspapers of ours said, if you remember, that he had exiled her.) Mrs. Browning is quite as enthusiastic for the Prince President as ever. To-day, too, came

a packet of unbound sheets—a poem without a title-page, whose title I take to be 'Verdicts.' It is on recent poets, and shows great boldness and talent. The page and a half given to me is most carefully and beautifully written, and with so much encomium that one cannot help thinking it must be by a friend. Mrs. Browning says George Sand is not 'taller than I am,'—short, of a colourless, olive complexion, with dark, glowing eyes, black hair, and a noble countenance. She was very simply dressed (as a woman), in a room with a bed in it—her manner very kind, very quiet; a low, soft voice, an unemphatic utterance, rather calm than ardent. Now all this I knew except the shortness, which I can hardly believe even now; she must have looked so ill in doublet and hose. Mrs. Browning could not help stooping to kiss her hand, upon which Madame Sand threw her arms round her neck and kissed her upon the lips.

The following is Miss Mitford's reply to a second letter from Mr. Starkey; it is undated, but from the postmark seems to have been sent on February 25, 1852:—

You will spoil me, dear Mr. Starkey, by over-kindness, which from such a person as you is very dangerous. I can hardly tell you how much I was made ashamed by your letter; the estimate of those poor poets is a poem in itself—all the more a poem because of its truth. It is a compliment to my own critical vanity to say how nearly we agree in our estimate, differing only so far as any two outspoken and independent minds unbiassed by clique or coterie

would be sure to differ, as much as two leaves upon the same oak-tree. I have been called to the examination of our recent great poets, or rather to my own impression of them, by the receipt of the sheets of a poem—not yet published—called 'Verdicts.' It arrived without preface, title-page, or written note, or anything to give token of the author, and it is only by an advertisement in a paper sent to me to-day for another purpose that I find it to be published by Effingham Wilson. It is very powerful, knocking down false reputations, Keble, Pollok, Kirke White, Robert Montgomery (by the way, Mrs. Hoare tells me the aforesaid Robert proposed to and was refused by poor Mrs. James Gray), separating the man Southey from the author and the poet Wordsworth from the man.

It is the first time I ever saw the truth told in print of Wordsworth, whom I never saw in his own mountains, but whom I sat next at dinner one year in London four days running, to the great endangerment of my admiration, for a man so wrapt up in the double worship of his own poetry and of mere rank and riches in others I never did see. It is not of that that the poet of 'Verdicts' talks, but of his general coldness to others; we neither of us bring the slightest accusation against him in point of conduct, but the thing was disenchanting, nevertheless. There are a good many points in which he and I should disagree, and his over-estimate of my poor books is something to wonder at in so acute a person. But still it is a very powerful and shining poem, and would have been sure to make a sensation, if the

author had had a little more sense of sound. It is written in the Bath Guide jingle, which, if it do not run trippingly over the tongue, is worse than nothing. None but a contemporary of Moore can tell how much his fine feeling of rhythm, the flow and sweetness of his verse, aided his reputation. People were helped to the words by the sound, and so remembered them; it was like an air in music.

And so, dear Mr. Starkey, you have written a tragedy! and upon the most delightful of all subjects, the Spaniards and the Moors. I remember seeing a great conjunction of fine actors, Young, Charles Kemble, Macready, and Miss O'Neill in a drama called the 'Apostate,' by Mr. Shiel. Of course such a cast would have ensured success under any circumstances; but I always thought the happy selection of place, and time, and races did more for it still. I would never recommend any friend to write for the stage, because it nearly killed me with its unspeakable worries and anxieties, and I am certainly ten years older for having so written; but of all forms of poetry it is the one I prefer, and I would always advise the writing with a view to the production of the piece upon the boards, because it avoids the danger of interminable dialogues of coldness and of languor. I remember a dear friend of mine (Mr. Monck, member for Reading, a first-rate scholar, and a man of great general taste) confessing to me that he read himself to sleep four nights in one week over the 'Fall of Jerusalem' of our mutual friend, Mr. Milman. Write for the stage, but don't bring the play out, that is my advice. If you wish to know my

reasons, you may find some of them in the fact that one of my tragedies had seven last acts, and that two others fought each other during a whole season at Covent Garden Theatre, Mr. Macready insisting upon producing one, Charles Kemble equally bent upon the other—neither of them even pretending to any superiority of either play, but because one, a man of fifty, would play the young man's part, and the other insisted that none but himself should have anything like a telling part at all. Both were read in the green-room, both advertised, and just think of the poor author in the country all the time, while the money was earnestly wanted, and the non-production fell upon her like a sin!

Some day you must let me see your tragedy. I am very sure that it is the finest form of poetry, that which unites passion and action, which talks, and lives, and moves.

Yes, it was Beranger. I have a great love of French literature, and a great habit of throwing myself into it for months together, and the lyrics of Victor Hugo (not his dramas or novels), and the *chansons* of the great old man (of which I do not mean the *chansons grivoises*, for which he is now probably infinitely grieved) always seem to me the verdant spots of French poetry. I forgot to tell Emily Jephson that Mr. Browning says M. de Cormenin (you know the brilliant political writer) was Louis Napoleon's adviser in the confiscation of the Orleans property.

I shall have tired you to death with this long scrawl, dear Mr. Starkey, all unworthy as I am to be

the faintest shadow of Miss Edgeworth. But my rheumatism is to blame. I have been afraid of the wind to-day, and my correspondents have suffered.

The following is from Miss Jephson to Mr. Starkey:

MISS JEPHSON *to* MR. STARKEY.

March 11.

MY DEAR MR. STARKEY,

A charming letter has just arrived from dear Miss Mitford, except that I am sorry for her rheumatism, which is worse, and her writing is quite rheumatic. I will transcribe most of her letter for you, it will divert me from thinking of a trouble of my own.

'What is very strange about Motherwell is that I have literally given of him all that will live—the lyrics are common and poor. Most wonderful that the man who wrote that inimitable ballad, or, rather, those two inimitable ballads, for I think "My heid is like to rend" nearly as fine as "Jeanie Morrison," although more painful, should not have produced other poems of merit. To be sure he was touching and retouching "Jeanie Morrison," line by line and word by word, all his life. As for Dr. Holmes, who lives, they say, on every man's lips in Boston, he was totally unknown in England until I published my book. By mere accident my dear friend Mr. Fields sent me his "Astræa." He appears to me the most charming little person under the sun, what Moore was thirty years ago, with more pith and substance, singing his own songs as nobody else can sing them, reciting poems, delivering speeches, the most brilliant and sparkling man of society that ever lived, and one of

the most skilful and admirable physicians, who makes every patient his friend. John Whittier is a Quaker. It is to be noted that he sent me an illustrated edition of his works, bound in scarlet morocco, with a vast quantity of gilding and a portrait; but he himself is a very strict Quaker, calling every man by his Christian name, and theeing everybody male or female. He is popular, as the ardent party-man will generally be, that is, with the abolitionists, a sincere and zealous man, who would lay down his life for his opinion. I think I like a little volume of his, called 'Songs of Labour,' even better than the ballads I have quoted, although it is less characteristic. 'Nathaniel Hawthorne' is the most beautiful of all. Magnificently beautiful, and gifted, as you see, and educated at the same college, and with the same advantages as Longfellow, he was, three or four years ago, without vice or extravagance on his part, literally starving. My friend, Mr. Fields, heard of it (he is a partner in the great publishing house in America), and being a man of fine taste, as well as fine feeling, and having seen some of Hawthorne's magazine articles, he went to him and said, 'I have such a faith in you that, if you will give me a book, I will print two thousand five hundred copies, run all risks, and allow you twenty-five per cent.' The poor author demurred; he had begun a tale which was to form one of a volume of short stories, and showed him neither more nor less than the 'Scarlet Letter.' My friend, Mr. Fields, himself a poet, said at once, 'This must not be one of a volume of short stories; it must be a fully developed tale, and accordingly

Mr. Hawthorne took his advice, and is now in comfort and affluence. Still it is a difficult mind to deal with. I asked Mr. Fields why he had not endeavoured to expunge the railway journey in the 'House of the Seven Gables,' which is a blot upon the book, and he said, 'If I had found the slightest fault, he would instantly have flung the whole MS. into the fire.' Mr. Whittier went to see him once, and the maid denied him. The Quaker, seeing him through the window, made his way in. Hawthorne hardly spoke. Whittier is habitually taciturn, but after sitting a quarter of an hour in absolute silence, he got up and said, 'This won't do, Nathaniel; let us go out into the fields,' and then they got on better. Miss Brewer, who was two years in America, told Mrs. Kingsley that Hawthorne was mad. Now, that is not the case, but it is a peculiar idiosyncrasy, and there is no saying how it may end. If you saw all his writing, you would see how very much the unreal predominates over the real—the bright, sunny daylight of life and of Nature. Have you seen Longfellow's 'Golden Legend'? I delight in it. It is the most racy of all his poems, a complete re-production of German literature and German life in the Middle Ages—quaint, rich, and grand as a Gothic cathedral. There is one passage on a bell, in an outdoor sermon, peculiarly fine. It is taken from an old German poem, with an improved catastrophe. You know of course that the 'Evangeline' was taken from the 'Hermann and Dorothea' of Goethe.

If I write another book, I shall make an article on Summervill. It is a grand old house of more than

ordinary interest—I mean, Elizabeth gave it to Leicester (odious people both!), and Charles II. used to be much there when the court was at Ivybridge. Miss Goldsmid says that it remains just as it was when peopled with the heroes and heroines of the 'Memoires de Grammont.' It will put one's English and one's dexterity to the test to give a scene or two which shall lose the wickedness and retain the wit of Count Anthony Hamilton, but I shall try. Full it is of old pictures and old books, the park and gardens full of fine old trees and sweet old flowers.

Yes—you do know Woodcock Lane; but the beginning is the least picturesque part, although it looks cool and verdant even there. Here I can reach the other end of the lane through about a mile of exquisite scenery—but when I shall be able to walk a mile again who can tell? However, my own lanes are charming. Mr. Starkey is a man in a million.

MISS MITFORD *to* MR. STARKEY.

March 16.

Your letters, dearest Mr. Starkey, always give me the strongest desire to possess that carpet of the 'Arabian Nights' by which one might transport oneself whither one would. If I had it, you would assuredly see a little old woman, ugly enough for a personage in any fairy tale, alight amongst your family party (Emily says that it is there you ought to be kept), and taking place amidst your beautiful children and your charming wife for the sake of a good literary talk.

What I like least in re-reading 'Verdicts' is the

exceeding one-sidedness. It is strange that extreme liberals should be so little tolerant—and out of this springs a great many differences of opinion. He overrates Dickens, and Jerrold, and Bulwer much—all, to my fancy, so vulgar in their different ways; and underrates Scott. Besides there is a want of compression, very bad in satire, which should be rapid and pungent; nevertheless, there is talent.

Poor Mr. Moore! I knew him well, and, rating him as a poet much lower than you do, delighted in him as a companion and wit—the most perfectly graceful, genial, and kindly of all wits. As a family man, he was, I believe, more than usually amiable. My acquaintance with him was in town, but a dear friend of mine was his near neighbour and Mrs. Moore's intimate friend at Sloperton, and she says that she never knew a more exemplary husband and father. After the loss of all his children, they saw him one day looking over a large packet of letters from eminent persons. He said, 'I think I shall burn these now, for there is nobody left to value them for my sake, and I do not wish them to be preserved as autographs.' He died, as of course you know, of the same disease that carried off Scott and Southey, and of which Dr. Buckland is now dying, softening of the brain. A remarkable instance of the strange and variable manner in which that complaint works was related to me the very day after it occurred by my friend the Rev. Alexander Dyce. He was spending a day with me two or three years ago, with our mutual friend William Harness, and he said, 'I breakfasted yesterday with Rogers, and he showed me a

letter just received from Moore—the strangest letter, sentences begun and broken off and begun again, just like the sort of copy that a very small schoolboy makes when writing his first letter home. We were quite startled, but, going to Longmans on business afterwards, they showed me a letter that they had just received from Moore about a bargain for his diaries—a short, clear letter of business which would have done honour to any banker in London. Both letters bore the same date.' Now this was before the disease had declared itself, and, I suppose, could only be explained by his retaining the power of exerting his mind for the short letter on business, whilst the command deserted him while writing to a familiar friend like Mr. Rogers. How that disease is increasing! Mr. Kingsley and dear John Lucas, the great portrait-painter, have both confessed to me that they apprehend themselves to be affected by it—young men both, but both addicted to smoking. By the way, I have to-day a very charming letter from a young American in Rome, and, amongst other stories of the Laureate in Italy, he says that he left Florence because he could get no good tobacco. As to the late Laureate, I admire as much as can be his earlier and greater poems. Half a volume will live as long as the language. I am afraid that I have never so heartily liked Wordsworth since it became a fashion to praise him, and little misses and heavy young gentlemen who have no real enjoyment in literature of any kind have thought it necessary to fling themselves into ecstasies at his power.

CHAPTER XI.

LETTERS FROM MISS MITFORD TO MISS JEPHSON AND DIGBY STARKEY.

MISS MITFORD *to* DIGBY STARKEY, ESQ.

Saturday night, April 12, 1852.

MY DEAR MR. STARKEY,

I go at once to business. You would hardly imagine me to be a veteran writer, so little I know of authors, editors, or publishers. The only living English publisher whom I have ever seen is, I believe, Mr. Bentley, and I have only seen him twice, and certainly should not know him again. Messrs Blackwood sent me their magazine containing a review of myself, with a very kind note, a week or two back. I do, however, know their London manager. I enclose you a note for him, which you may deliver or not, as you like. His family are people of old standing in the vale of Berkshire, farming their own property—most respectable in every way. Still he is only the managing man at Messrs Blackwood's, and it is not like giving you a note to one of themselves. I suppose that Professor Aytoun is the editor; but even this I do not absolutely know.

You and Mr. Waller will spoil me, my dear Mr. Starkey. I never could understand what people find to like in my letters, unless it be that they spring direct from the soil, that they have a root to them—the sort of quality that makes one sometimes prefer a wild plant alive and growing in its woodland nook to a fine-cut flower in a rich vase. It is strange how few people let one have thought and feeling just as they spring, either in letters or in conversation. They talk reviews, they talk newspapers, anything except the natural promptings of their own minds. But I must not forget that some of my correspondents—you, for instance—are affluent to overflowing; you give the impulse, and then praise that which you have prompted. Of one thing be quite assured, that I consider myself very much the greater gainer in our epistolary intercourse. Is it never to be more than epistolary? Is the one day in London 'quite literal'? If not, if you can come here for a few hours, putting up with a cutlet at any time that may best suit you, you must let me have one line sent off the day before. You will find me crippled by rheumatism, and perhaps enchained by another terrible infliction—the dreadful operation of sitting for a portrait. Mr. Bentley sent to desire one of the many already taken, each being more unlike than the other. I wrote to tell our dilemma to Mr. Lucas, to whom I had long promised to sit, and accordingly he is coming on Monday, although, as I hope and believe that what he is about to do is only a drawing, it will hardly last longer than a couple of days. Do you (yourself, dear Emily says, so charming an artist)

know John Lucas's portraits? It is not a noisy reputation; he exhibits little, never took the trouble of belonging to the Academy, and is seldom puffed in the newspapers. But somehow or other the best judges, the most refined people, go to him. The Duke (who, perhaps no great connoisseur himself, yet lives among those who are) sits reluctantly to anyone else, and generally refers all who ask him to 'John Lucas's last picture.' I suppose he has painted him some fifty times. Sir Robert Peel employed him to finish the Gallery of Contemporary Statesmen, which Sir Thomas Laurence began—I don't think any other artist worked at it—and now he is busy with another class of eminent men, our great engineers, having painted the Stephensons, father and son, especially George Stephenson, the elder and greater of the two, almost as often as the Duke. His whole career is one delightful to contemplate—a struggle, always a struggle, and sometimes a very hard one, but patient, self-denying, virtuous, indomitable, and finally successful. His father, a junior clerk in the War Office, died early, and this, his eldest son, was placed as apprentice to Mr. Reynolds, an eminent mezzotint engraver. He told everybody that he would not be an engraver—that he would be a painter, and nothing else; but an engraver he was doomed to be, even running away did not change his destiny. They coaxed him back, so there he stayed from fourteen to twenty-one, working from nine in the morning till eight at night, stealing all his mornings and half his meal-times for copying the fine pictures his master had to engrave (the 'Chapeau de Paille' amongst the

rest). By the time he was twenty he had made for himself so much reputation as an oil-painter as to have two or three portraits to paint among the professional people (clergymen and physicians) of the neighbourhood, and Mr. Reynolds gave him one day in the week to fulfil his commissions, the fifty-two days having to be replaced after the apprenticeship had expired. When that hour of release arrived, he offered him a large salary to remain with him, as Cornish (also one of his pupils) had done, but our painter refused, flung himself courageously upon the higher branches of art, and through many privations has won at forty-five his present position. A most charming person he is. I owe him immense goodwill as being one of the few young men of genius who have not disappointed my enthusiasm; in general they lose heart, or they lose temper, or they go astray, or they die. I think a portrait of me was the third he painted after he left Mr. Reynolds, through the intervention of Mr. Milton, Mrs. Trollope's brother, my old friend and neighbour, interested in him because his father had been a clerk in the War Office, where he held a higher post. From that hour we have been fast friends. The moment he had a house he installed his mother in it, he has been a father to his younger brothers, he married a pretty, amiable, domestic woman for love, he despises all fineries, and is, as I said before, a most charming person—delightful in manner, in conversation, and in appearance. He looks good.

What is very odd is that, just before this affair of Mr. Bentley, my maid K. had shown a miniature,

taken of me when between three and four years old, to a friend of mine who took a fancy to it. I let him him have it, of course, and now it seems *that* is in course of being engraved also, to the great begrudging of Mr. Bentley, who wants both, and I suppose will finally have a second engraving of the miniature. So there will be the little childish face and the poor old miserable cripple of now-a-days side by side—a morality as good as a death's head and cross bones any day.

What did I say about Mr. Moore, I wonder? One's only misgiving should be the apparent presumption of saying anything at all, my chief knowledge of him being the meeting him at the houses of mutual friends, and hearing of him often from those who knew him well and loved him most. A most delightful person he was, and, I believe, a most amiable one. The sins of the foolish volume, which did not bear his name, were, I believe, by none more regretted than himself. When one looks at the works of Herrick, for instance—a clergyman of the Church of England—it does seem strange how such refinement can be joined with such grossness. The political squibs I have seen, and (don't be angry, now) I confess that I think that *there* (especially in bits of the Judge family) lay his forte—some of the fun in those letters has not been exceeded even by Mr. Barham (Thomas Ingoldsby). I am quite sure that, except upon the ground of partiality, I might always trust to you as regards myself, your judgment being better than my own.

Thank you very much for 'The Slingsby Papers.'

I had seen and heard enough of them to wish to see more, and have just been reading with great interest the 'Legend of St. Valentine.' I like those stories of Martyrology. Mr. Kingsley told me that except his own father I was the only one who had ever spoken to him of Lockhart's fine novel 'Valerius.' Thank you very much. The other day I received out of Wales, sent by somebody who, signing his or her letter with five initials and a surname (Wynne), left the gender uncertain, an unpublished charade of Mr. Reed's, very different from any of the others, a charade in three pictures. and in the old ten syllable couplet, but full of his ease, and taste, and matchless grace. You shall have a copy in my next dispatch.

Another present I have had—an old cane, the real and veritable cane always used by the celebrated speaker Lenthall, and handed down in the family as an heirloom. It looks two hundred years old, tough, and dry, and incredibly light, with a top of enamelled copper, the tip broken off (beheaded, so to say, by that benevolent Roundhead), and decorated by a sort of loop and tassel of plaited leather. Looking after his name as appended to one of the letters signed by him, but written by Milton, I was amused to see that Christina of Sweden was addressed as Queen of the Goths and Vandals.

Did I tell Emily Jephson a story of Mr. Byron—the Shelley letter-forger, and his doings with Mr. Bennett? It is curious. If you do not know that, it must be also for the next packet. Do you know, my dear Mr. Starkey, that I believe your business life

is good for your talent as an author. My friend, Mr. Bennett, has just joined his brother in Cheapside, whose watchmaking and jewellery business is the greatest in the City of London, and he agrees with me that it does add tone and muscle to the otherwise too delicate and unsubstantial turn of genius.

All success to your literary negotiations! I should augur well of a prose tale by you. Well! I think you will not again be in haste to encourage me to write you long letters—I that live like a sort of female hermit in the quietest nook in England.

Ever, dear friend,

Very faithfully yours,

M. R. MITFORD.

MISS MITFORD *to* DIGBY STARKEY, ESQ.

April 29, 1852.

Well, my dear Mr. Starkey, I wonder if I shall tire you of my letters? I'm going to try, because, if I've to write another book, as they tell me, it follows, of course, that I shall give my correspondents some respite, and, therefore, may as well weary them first. Let me say how very glad I am that my letter reached you, and that the little note did its business. I hope that the MS. will find a vacancy, for that will probably be the question. I take for granted that they have hundreds of offers at this moment, and cannot always be expected to keep a place for the best. Chance has something to do in these things, as well as choice. As to Mr. Langford, I wish you had an hour to give him. He would have told you all the chit-chat of London literature, and would

have let you find out a fine manly nature under the gossiping. For my part I have been listening to the artistical chit-chat of my dear friend Mr. Lucas—infinitely amusing when one happens to know the people. Do you know Sir Edwin Landseer? Mr. Lucas and he live just opposite at St. John's Wood, and frequently walk home together from great houses where they have dined, that being their chief acquaintanceship, for they are far too different men to be intimate. Knowing that they often met, Mr. Peto, when sitting to Mr. Lucas, requested him to take a message for him to Sir Edwin. Accordingly during their next night's walk my friend said, 'I am commissioned by Mr. Peto to ask you to do him the favour to paint him a picture—on your own subject, of your own size, at your own price, at your own time. His offer is quite unlimited. He leaves all to you.' 'Really,' responded the little dog-painter, 'I cannot give any promise at present; but I'll bear it in my mind.' I wish you had heard the exquisite touch of mimicry with which John Lucas (who is himself an exceedingly delightful compound of courtliness and manliness), drawled out, in the finest whisper, 'I'll bear it in mind.' There was an answer to a commission more than royal—for I am quite sure that (except Louis Napoleon) there is not a prince now alive who would have given such a one. But Landseer is faithful to his worship of lords. If a peerage had been given to Mr. Peto last year—all Peto and all engineer as he is—the answer would have been different. What is worse, this coxcombry is spreading among these really great artists—Lewis

is come back from Cairo just as exclusive, making it a far greater favour to paint for people than any of the immortal painters of the great age of Art. He seems to have been cultivating coxcombry during his long residence in the East. Thackeray, with whom he had been intimate in London, went to see him at Cairo, and found him in a room fitted up with divans and carpets in a style perfectly Oriental, with a beard to his waist. The painter never rose, but waved his hand for his visitor to be seated, and for several minutes there they sat as silent as two pashas. At last Mr. Lewis clapped his hands, and a whole covey of black boys, pretty much of a size, all properly turbaned, and trowsered, and besashed, made their appearance with trays of coffee, and sweetmeats, and rose-water, and chibooks. Having drunk their coffee and begun to smoke, the Orientalized Englishman found his tongue, and it is to be presumed that Mr. Thackeray did not depart without reading him a lesson.

My friend is of another stamp. I know nobody so agreeable. He has made a portrait of me, ugly old woman as I am, which is really a miracle of art. I wish you could see it. He calls it an oil sketch—the background and figure being very slightly painted, but the head (half the size of life) finished almost like a miniature. It is an oval picture. I cannot fancy that the engraver will transmit the expression, which is the wonderful point of this extraordinary portrait, to the steel. How a painter can convey anything so evanescent, so ideal, to the canvas is wonder enough! All who have seen it cry out upon

the likeness, which is as a looking-glass, but it seems to me, as far as that remarkable expression goes, to look not as I ever do, but as it is just possible I might do. It is not at all animated, which would be the trap into which a vulgar artist would undoubtedly have fallen in painting me, but thoughtful and affectionate. Well, you will come and see me myself I do trust before the summer is over. You may see thousands better worth looking at, and listening to, dear Mr. Starkey, but you will hardly find anybody more rejoiced to make acquaintance with you.

Then I have had a visit from a young Cambridge student, a poet of the newest school, who won't be a barrister, as his mother desires, but will be a poet, and only a poet, nothing else. I knew his father well, a most brilliant man, who might have sat for the fine character of Clarence Hervey in that novel of Miss Edgeworth's, which for brilliancy and tenderness has always seemed to me her best—'Belinda.' His destiny was a mistaken, although not an unprosperous, one, and now that he has been long dead, the mother, and elder brother, and aunts, think him revived in this boy. I do not. The father had a magnificent gift of public speaking, and added to the buoyant and graceful lightness of old English comedy an earnestness without which there can be no eloquence, and hardly, I think, any poetry. This youth is a handsome coxcomb, without the slightest enthusiasm, without, as it seems to me, the power of admiring anything or anybody; for those whom he does patronize—the Jerrolds, and Dickens', and

Robert Brownings—he patronizes with a full sense of his condescension, whilst he very heartily disclaims all acquaintance with Pope or Dryden (observe that his own first essay is a volume called 'Stories from Boccaccio'), and rather boasts that, although he has tried to read Scott's novels, he cannot get on with them. I think it would be no bad plan to introduce him to Sir Edwin and Mr. Lewis, and just see what they thought of each other. It might turn out a society for mutual improvement. However, they *are* painters, and great painters in their way—whilst what will become of this poor boy there is no telling. He minces his words like Landseer, and sticks his glass in his eye. The only thing worth repeating that I ever heard from him is a *good-natured bon mot* of Jerrold's. They were talking of epitaphs at Charles Knight's, and asked the malicious little wit to furnish one for their host. 'It should be very short,' said Jerrold, 'Good Night.' Nothing can be happier than this.

I am in a vein to-night of writing the wrong word for the right—just as compositors print—and can only beg you to be as indulgent as the Moore committee. What a mistake! But there are fifty such in my last book, not, I hope, re-produced in the Paris edition, or in the American ones. I had thought that the new international law would have put a stop to Galignani's reprints, but it has not. Where the demand is large, he finds it more profitable to purchase the copyright in France of the English publisher than to import the work. By-the-

way, without having any personal cause to delight in Mr. Bentley, I think him perfectly right in the bold stand he is making against the other great publishers, and give him all possible credit for his ability and his moral courage. I have good cause to believe those very able statements which bear his name to be his own writing, because I have had from him two or three private letters on the subject, even more condensed, and more lucid. He was educated at St. Paul's School, and is certainly a clever man.

You will understand, dear friend, that what I feared about Mr. Moore was seeming to arrogate greater intimacy with a distinguished man than actually existed. I had seen him often, often sat next him at dinner; we have exchanged notes occasionally, and were excellent friends, but neither of us living in London, nor within visiting distance in the country, I have never been at his house, and he, I think, only once at our cottage, though, if I had gone near Sloperton, I should undoubtedly have accepted his repeated invitations, and have gone to see one whom I always found so pleasant and so kind. You will comprehend that aversion to claiming acquaintance with great people who might disclaim me. It sometimes leads one into the contrary fault, and I find people saying, 'Why, he said that he knew you.'

So you are reading Lamartine's 'Restoration.' I was like my young poet with Scott's novels, and could not get on with it anyhow. I am afraid that I like nothing heartily of Lamartine, except 'Le Lac,' and 'Jocelyn' (a little), and 'Les Girondins'—that

charming romance (he calls it a history), which, knowing it all by reading a dozen real histories, and a hundred memoirs of the period, yet carries one on, partly by subject, partly by style. I suppose that he is always false, but in 'Les Girondins' one is beguiled into forgetting that great literary sin; for it is worse than a fault. If you have happened to read his half dozen autobiographies (for such they are under different names) you will find that, at three or four different dates, fifteen years asunder, he calls himself twenty—his favourite age—and indeed, in something written a year or two ago, he speaks of himself as then a man still in his prime, in the summer of his days, or words to that effect—and he was sixty then! Ah, if he had my rheumatism!! Vanity is the ruling motive there of course, and I suppose that wounded vanity—something that Louis Napoleon has done, or left undone, personally towards him, is his reason for publishing this weak and dull attack upon the Emperor. But his incapacity for appreciating truth is best shown in 'Géneviève,' where, without any possible personal motive, he shows an indifference to it which is almost inconceivable in one who has so long practised writing as an art. Do you remember that the whole gist of the story turns on this pattern woman of the people sacrificing her own reputation, losing the man of her heart, making him miserable, and oversetting the comfort of a whole family by accepting the scandal of a natural child in order to preserve a dead sister and her dead lover (for there is nobody left alive to profit by the lie) from the blame, the posthumous blame of their fault—in the

more romantic words of the writer to preserve unstained the funeral garland of the sister whom she loved? It is the exact reverse of Jeanie Deans, and in my mind both were wrong. I would have told the lie in Jeanie's case, the less evil of the two, but in Géneviève's it was a deliberate preference of falsehood for no cause whatever. She lied for lying's sake. And this runs all through Lamartine's writings, and was the cause of his fall. I am very fond of French literature, with all its sins—I know it, I think, better than English. God bless you, dear friend!

Ever faithfully yours,

M. R. MITFORD.

MISS JEPHSON *to* DIGBY STARKEY, ESQ.

May 1.

MY DEAR MR. STARKEY,

There is a *new* pleasure for me connected with dear Miss Mitford's letters of late, for I have now and then something to send you that I *know* you like. Is not her description of the ungenial season very poetical? It reminds one of Titania's. The east wind has not done *us* such wrong; our wild flowers blow, and our birds sing, but I have not yet seen a swallow. Is there an instinct that tells the swallows what the weather is in the distant countries to which they are about to migrate and retards their flight thither? or do they come, and, meeting the harsh wind, withdraw till it is gone? . . .

If the faith which has the least foundation is the most meritorious, it seems to me that the Louis Napoleon faith has extraordinary merit. Pray hope

for me in that Mr. Bentley will be generous, and that I shall have the two portraits; I have one of Miss M. by Lucas, and it is very like, but the dress is unsuited to the face, and entirely spoils it. I wrote to you yesterday.

E. J.

The following letter from Miss Mitford is enclosed.

MISS MITFORD *to* MISS JEPHSON.

April 26, 1852.

MY VERY DEAR EMILY,

There are not many people to whom I should venture to send poetry addressed to myself, and, to say the truth, I receive so much of the peculiar rhymes which the old poets used to call 'commendatory verses' that I have a perfect horror of the sight of lines beginning with capitals and ending (but in these days of lax versification they very seldom do so end) with similar sounds. However, the accompanying lines seem to me quite an exception to my rule of aversion—are they not charming?[1] The writer is a

[1] These lines, which have been given in the 'Life of M. R. Mitford,' are as follows:—

On being asked if Miss Mitford were not old.

Ye would not ask it of the sun that shines upon us daily,
Or of the fleecy painted clouds that float above us gaily,
Or of the spring's returning flowers, or the dew their petals lading,
Or of the heaven-besprinkling stars, when morn their gold is fading,
Or of the crested billows, when upon the shore they're casting
Their flashing sprays of diamonds; for ye know them everlasting
Till their Ruler's might shall gather them within His wondrous holding,
For which we look half fearfully—frail creatures of His moulding.

young and beautiful girl, daughter of a veterinary surgeon in Reading, who was introduced to me when about fourteen, and whom I have supplied with books and seen frequently ever since. She is a sweet, open-hearted creature. Her father is lately dead, and an uncle, a surgeon in India, married, and without a family, has sent for her to live with them, not to get a husband—I would answer with my life for Marianne's delicacy and fastidiousness,—but to be taken as a daughter. There is a sister to remain with the mother, who tearfully consents to a project so advantageous (for the uncle and aunt are educated and accomplished people), and the poor child herself is half broken-hearted, and yet full of grateful affection towards those to whom she is going. It's a contest of feeling—all right and natural. May God's mercy go with her! She is a sweet creature, and certainly a girl of far more genius than the many I know who set up for great poetesses.

Mr. Lucas, who was here when they arrived, and is

The beautiful is never old. Our minds are still extending,
And new emotions of the soul are with each moment blending;
And so her spirit seems to me an ever-rising mountain,
Upon whose glorious sides still plays the broad Castalian fountain,
Or as an oak, whose green boughs spread, and throw luxuriantly
A shelter o'er small birds of song—scarce worthy there to be;
But verdure rests upon her leaves, they dread no frost's decaying,
Her charm upon the landscape cast will evermore be staying,
As mid her own dear village haunts, my gauntlet down I'm flinging,
The very birds that flutter round are blithe my measure singing.
She is not old. The spirit's youth will but to heaven be winging.

MARIANNE PARRY.

Reading, April 26, 1852.

a man of very fine taste, was so struck with the lines that he has made his boy, who was also here, copy them for his mother's album. Perhaps, my love, you do not know why Mr. Lucas was here. It has pleased Fate, in the shape of Mr. Bentley, to set his heart on portraits of me. There are *two* engravings to be made of a miniature taken when I was between three and four years old—and he wants the miniature into the bargain, or, rather, he grudges it to Mr. Bennett, to whom it is irrevocably given; and now that Mr. Lucas, incomparably the finest painter of female portraits now alive, has condescended to come and take me, he is not content with the engraving, which he is to have, but he covets the picture. I fancy, if he can get *his* engraving of the miniature done soon enough, that both are to appear in the new number of his miscellany, which he is working to get up by first-rate illustrations. Afterwards they will appear in their legitimate place in future editions of my last book, or at the head of another, if I live to write one. I wonder whether Mr. Bentley, who is making a great deal of money of the 'Recollections,' will send me any copies of the engravings. If he do, it would be a singular pleasure to send you one of them; but it is doubtful. The American publishers purchased the early sheets of him, and now, under the new law, he is making Galignani (forced to reprint it in Paris from the large demand there) pay for the right of publication in France. If the engraving approach the high artistic value of Mr. Lucas's picture, it will be no common print, for certainly so successful a portrait was never taken. It tried us

both, for I sat and he painted nine hours a day; and on Saturday my legs were so much swollen that both K. and I thought my stockings must have been cut off. Till the east wind abates, there is no chance of amendment, and Professor Airy says we are to have five weeks more. For two months not a drop of rain has fallen. We have sharp frosts every night; the hedges are bare, the very oaks are let stand, because the sap has not risen enough to back them. The flowers refuse to blow in wood or field, or, if a few rare and reluctant blossoms appear, they are scentless. I have only once heard the nightingale amongst our coppices or our woody lanes, and in this place, literally named after the swallow, not one has appeared. Never in my remembrance has there been so severe a season. It has carried off too many of my dearest friends, amongst the rest my most kind and accomplished neighbour, Sir Henry Russell, and I fear his death will eventually deprive me of Miss Russell, my own Anne; for, although the new baronet be a nice lad, yet one cannot expect a gay young Guardsman to live quietly with his mother and sisters.

I had a charming letter, or note rather, from dear Mr. Starkey, containing a half promise to come to see me in the summer—Heaven send it come true! I am expecting my glorious Americans now in Paris, and tribes of people from London, and dear Lady Stanley —only think of our having in common the Louis Napoleon faith. Mrs. Browning is more zealous in his cause than ever, and says that everybody in Paris is coming round. Do read the 'Prisoner of Ham,' in

spite of its bad English. It is the most interesting account of an escape ever written, and there are bits of his own writing that even the vile translation cannot rob of the charming sentiment. Adieu, my very dear love. Believe me, ever most affectionately yours,

M. R. MITFORD.

MISS JEPHSON *to* MR. STARKEY.

June 15.

MY DEAR MR. STARKEY,

I am very glad that you find so much pleasure in Miss Mitford's correspondence, and I am sure that yours is equally delightful to her. Your kindness in saying that you owe anything to me is very gratifying, but the truth is that your first letter to her was the origin of the friendship which has grown and flourished so happily. I cannot help being sorry that she will not know your reasons for not admiring Louis Napoleon as she does, which she will probably infer from your silence on the subject. She can bear very well a difference of opinion on most points, I believe, but, as you say, her feelings seem strongly engaged on the side of Louis Napoleon. I tried in vain some time ago to get 'Inez de Castro,' and others asked Miss Mitford to lend it to me for you; but it seems that it never was printed. I enclose her answer to my request.

The following is the letter referred to:—

MISS MITFORD *to* MISS JEPHSON.

MY VERY DEAR EMILY,

I am in so much haste that I foresee this will be merely a scrap; but I wished to tell you that 'Inez

de Castro,' although three times in rehearsal, was never acted, and therefore never printed. I am not even sure that I have a MS. copy. If I have, I suppose that some time or other I shall make a volume of tragedies old and new, for my very best, 'Otto of Wittelsbach,' is in a similar predicament—at all events, the whole will be printed after I am dead. I have most interesting accounts of the Prince President from Mrs. Browning and Mr. Fields, whom I expect here soon, and who will, I hope, bring me a cartload of books about him. I told him to get me *all*, and the best portraits. He says that none do justice to his pale, earnest face, with its look of deep feeling, and the calm, gracious English manner as he saw him for two hours when sitting almost close to him at a ball at the Tuileries. He said to Madame Sand, on parting from her, after granting all she asked and begging her to visit him again, 'Vous verrez, vous serez contente de moi.' To which she replied, 'Et vous, vous serez content de moi.' Was not this exceedingly nice on both sides, especially on his? I have a long, interesting letter from Mrs. Trollope at Florence, acting charades—what a woman!

MISS JEPHSON *to* D. STARKEY, ESQ.

July 29, 1852.

MY DEAR MR. STARKEY,

Here is a letter which I will transcribe before I send it to you to-day, so pray keep it; is not this *generous* of me, because, if I asked you to return it, I

should have, *perhaps*, a few lines from you, which I much long for.

Yesterday I went with Mrs. Halloran and Mrs. Chatterton to the regatta, and was charmed with the beauty and the novelty, to *me*, of all that I saw. We drove to Ballinacurragh, five miles from hence, and there found a crowded steamer, which took us to Queenstown. The views on both sides were charming, and then it opened into that magnificent harbour, which you know. The fleet was gone, but the regatta was what I shall never forget. It was more like a beautiful oil-painting, at one particular moment, than reality. The sea was then quite calm, and of such an exquisite colour—land, sky, and sea were each and all perfection; ships and boats innumerable, from the *Ajax* man-of-war to a tiny steamer which could only hold ten men, but had its chimney smoking, its paddle-boxes, all that belongs to a steamer in miniature. Some ships were dressed out with colours, which had a beautiful effect; boats were passing, the boatmen wearing crimson handkerchiefs on their heads and white jackets; the yachts, with their white sails, but no wind to sail with; crowds on shore, all colours of ladies' dresses, parasols, &c. There was a rowing-match with boats called gigs, very narrow and shallow; each boat looked like nothing more than a dark line upon the water, with the heads of men above it, in one boat the rowers all in white, in another all in red, different colours in each. The white won, and there was great shouting. There is hope that the Queen will come. I must try if I can to see her.

The other day, reading Carlyle's 'Life of Oliver Cromwell,' I was reminded of an observation in one of your letters to me by an account of poor Sir. W. Raleigh's execution. Carlyle says:

'Such a man, with his head grown grey, with his strong heart breaking, still strength enough in it to break with dignity; somewhat proudly he laid his old grey head on the block, as if saying, in better than words, "There, then!" The sheriff offered to let him warm himself again within doors at a fire. "Nay, let us be swift," said Raleigh; "in a few minutes my ague will return upon me, and, if I be not dead before that, they will say I tremble for fear."'

This weather is so hot that I should be afraid you were not the better for it, but that you have the fine refreshing sea air, *part* of the day, at least, for I fear you do not feel much of it at the Four Courts. This is a day fit only for butterflies to be out in, who are all wings, and have nothing more to carry.

Ever your affectionate sister,

EMILY E. JEPHSON.

MISS MITFORD *to* MISS JEPHSON.

July 25.

You will, I know, dearest Emily, be glad to hear that, although still very weak and feeble, I am getting on towards recovery. It has been a most severe attack, and I cannot be thankful enough to my kind and skilful friend, Mr. May, and to my indefatigable nurse K., for the care that they have taken of me—I ought to add all the Russells. Poor Lady Russell, who had never before gone beyond her park gate

since her husband's death, and even now has seen nobody but me, has come to me every evening, and been to me as a sister, and her sweet daughters are more like daughters to me than nieces. What a blessing to be near such friends! Let me add that, as goodness is generally self-rewarding, their kindness has certainly done them all good by distracting them from their own sorrow, and giving them other things to think and to talk of. As to all my neighbours, their affection has been really wonderful, and it is at present Mr. May's great grievance that from pure gratitude I let in too many people. You know how excitable I am, and it is true that the very conversation that gives me pleasure while it lasts leaves me heated and exhausted when it is over. However, I am getting stronger now. What a comfort that you did not come to England this summer! Mrs. Browning is in London, but my going to meet her is out of the question, so that, except a visit of a day which she intends to make me, I shall hardly see her this year; and dear Miss Goldsmid, who came purposely to see me from London, arrived when I was too ill even to see her, which was most tantalizing. I wish you knew that great and able woman!

One visit I have had which you would have liked to have seen, since I have been able to admit one or two friends. Two ladies from Paris sent me the most earnest entreaties to let them in, an old lady and a young one. The elder, almost as wonderful a person as Lady Stanley, announced herself as having known my father and mother before their marriage, as having been present at the wedding, as having,

when a girl of eleven years old (she is seventy-six) been trusted to take the baby (me) in her arms. She remembered the house we inhabited at Alresford, the great dog, the pretty nursery-maid, and never having seen any of us since we left that place, when I was between three and four years old, but having followed my literary career with deep interest, you may imagine how much she was struck when Galignani's edition of my last book fell into her hands. She came from London on purpose to see me, and fully promises (D.V.) to pass a day with me next year. She is a magnificent old lady, full of fire and enthusiasm, and very clever. The young one—I think a grand-daughter—was also very charming. You may imagine that this was gratifying to both parties. On the other hand I have had a terrible shock. I told you of my visit from Miss Shee (sister to Sir George Shee, who is, I believe, our Minister at Stuttgardt), a most sweet creature, who left me the poems of her sister, Mrs. Robert Dering. My opinion of those poems, especially of the exquisite stanzas called 'Church Services,' brought on one of those correspondences of heart to heart and mind to mind, which ripen friendships even more than personal intercourse. I never read any letters like hers in their delicious grace and tenderness. There was a charm about them—a personal charm—like the odour of flowers. She had been ill, and her last note was written in pencil—the next thing I heard, while very ill myself, was that she was dead. She had sent me some beautiful Hertfordshire roses to clothe the front of my house, and now those roses are blossoming

under my window, and the kind heart that sent them is cold in the grave. Dear Miss Shee writes most beautifully of her death. It was quite sudden, and is supposed to have been caused by some internal rupture; but her whole life was a preparation for death. Nevertheless Miss Shee hardly expects her husband to survive her. There is only one son, a young man of great genius in another way, who is one of the most trusted in the great work of the Irish Submarine Telegraph. He seems to have left Oxford upon showing this strong turn for a pursuit which now takes rank with the learned professions, and leads at once to scientific fame, and to worldly prosperity, and I trust that his success will comfort his aunt and father. This has been to me one of the greatest shocks that I have known.

I have had an exquisite letter from Mrs. Hawthorne, and one still more interesting from dear Dr. Holmes, while I have been so ill, and have read Mr. Hawthorne's own copy of his new book, 'The Blythedale Romance,' the actual copy, which the moment it left my hands went to his, and first showed him his own thoughts in print. To say truth, I like it less than the other two great works, not merely because it is too long, not close enough, but because the characters are too unreal and exceptional, so that the only person whom I thoroughly fancy is a certain New England farmer, by name Silas Foster, who has nothing to do with the story, and seldom appears in the book, but who is flesh and blood. Nevertheless observe that the book with all its faults is one that nobody but Hawthorne could have written, that the

construction is magnificently tragic, and that there are certain scenes of wonderful power, especially the search for the body by night, which is quite equal to that in 'Guy Mannering.' Also, since I have been better, I have been reading Lord Cockburn's 'Life of Lord Jeffrey,' not well done, certainly, but some of the later letters are very interesting; what he says of Silchester, of Fletcher, and of the Irish songs and ballads is so like what I have always thought and often said, that it came upon me like an echo, and was very pleasant from one whose criticism is, according to my fancy, so much finer and better than that which we meet now.

N.B.—I quite disagree with him about Dickens, and it does not seem to me that he himself quite thinks all he says—by this I mean that I think he accommodates himself to the exaggerated tone, which Dickens is accustomed to, in order to insinuate personal good advice. It is no compliment to an author to send him letters full of nothing but praises of his own works. How wise Scott was in avoiding this! God bless you, my dear love! Say everything for me to your dear people, especially Mr. Starkey. This letter may serve for him as well as you, for K. has just come to scold me for writing so long a one, so I must say good-bye.

Ever faithfully and affectionately yours,

M. R. MITFORD.

CHAPTER XII.

LETTERS FROM MISS MITFORD TO MISS JEPHSON AND DIGBY STARKEY.

MISS MITFORD *to* DIGBY STARKEY, ESQ.

July 29, 1852.

I AM slowly mending, dear Mr. Starkey, but there is so much weakness that I see everybody almost as much alarmed at this sort of recovery as at the illness itself. Everyone's manner says what some say in words, that I am breaking fast. However I may revive, and if not, His will be done! I am, and have always been, a most deceiving person as to health and strength. There is an appearance of both about me, great animal spirits, great excitability, and that is at present Mr. May's dread, for I like conversation as well as ever, and it heats and flushes me, and then comes the re-action, the sleepless, restless fatigue, and the feverish languor. However, I am better, the pulse is better. I have the constant and anxious attention of the most skilful medical man I really believe alive, who is as much my friend as my physician, the affectionate care of two very attached

and faithful servants, the daily visits of one most charming family, and the calls and inquiries of more than are good for me (fourteen sets of people have been here to-day), so that the feeling of loneliness which often oppresses a poor old maiden lady wholly without relations is most mercifully spared me. Let me add the kind letters of distant correspondents, of old friends like Emily, of new friends, like yourself, and surely I have very much for which to be thankful!

I agree with you in all that you say of Mr. Hawthorne. The 'Great Stone Tale' is a grand piece of philosophy, and there is (I think in the 'Twice Told Tales') a most striking one, where a series of events are developed by sounds, not words, by some old hag in a valley at night. These were the things which inspired my dear friend, Mr. Fields, with the confidence in Mr. Hawthorne, that produced 'The Scarlet Letter,' and changed his position from most miserable destitution to affluence and comfort. Nothing can exceed the beauty of his style. It reminds me of the French of that greatest of novelists, Balzac, the same power of subtle analysis and of minute description. I don't now believe that Balzac is known to him—very few English do relish him as he deserves. It requires great familiarity with French literature to do so. This dear friend of mine, Mr. Fields, is a fine judge of style. He has collected, in seven thickly-printed volumes, all the writings of De Quincey—perhaps the greatest master of English now alive—and the sale in America of these volumes has been above three thousand, which, in six months, and without the

slightest meretricious attraction, is very creditable to the nation. Did I say that Hawthorne's letters are very charming, so natural, so graceful, so unaffectedly modest and unspoilt. I agree with you about Prescott and Irving, only Prescott provokes me by not taking part enough with the Peruvians, or even with the Mexicans. I hate that avarice which cloaked itself in fanaticism.

Longfellow has beautiful bits, but his prose is trash, and I confess that I think he owes his success here quite as much to his faults, his obscurity, his mysticism, and his little dash of cant as to his merits. For my own part I greatly prefer the healthy and cheerful masculine verse of Dr. Holmes. In consequence of my book, an English edition is just printed. Do read it, especially the latter part of 'Maria,' the introduction and commencement of 'Astræa,' and the 'Punchbowl.' He is a marvellous painter in words, and there is something about the whole man wonderfully large and fine. I have had from him letters as interesting as ever crossed the Atlantic. I have now on my bed (where I am writing) 'Uncle Tom's Cabin,' another American book; from which, I am told, Lord Carlisle said that he could not tear himself until he had completed it. I have only just begun it, but I doubt if it will equally enthral me. I have no love for negro stories. Knowing many Americans and many West Indians, I have learnt to consider emancipation as a question that has two sides. My friend, Mr. Webster (the greatest of living Americans) has lost his election because he was convinced that it would cause an immediate division of the Union,

and indeed mar the whole prosperity of the Republic, and when a man so wise resigns the hope of power, and risks his popularity from an honest conviction, they who have no personal means of judging would do well to pause.

I have not seen Lady Theresa's book. The friends (Lady Russell and her children) who have visited me every day for the last five weeks live in the splendid mansion erected by the second Lord Clarendon, and in which his greater father composed his history. Has anyone ever written the history of Lord Chesterfield's viceroyalty of Ireland? Surely that wit, whose fame, as Hayley says (the same might be said of himself), 'once rose too high, and now has sunk too low,' was the best governor Ireland ever had? Only think if an unpopular governor had been at the Castle during the Scotch rebellion what would have become of the House of Brunswick. Has that subject never tempted you? Adieu, dear Mr. Starkey. Say to Emily only that I am better than when I wrote to her, which is true. Your picture of the mock battle is very vivid. But our people do not understand these things; Louis Napoleon does. By-the-way, I have been reading his three volumes (in French, observe). The letter to his mother about the Cherbourg affair is most interesting; so is the bit on 'Exile;' and the introduction to the 'History of Artillery' is really like one of Southey's reviews.

Ever yours,

M. R. MITFORD.

MISS MITFORD *to* MISS JEPHSON.

Swallowfield, Saturday, August 23, 1852.

Ah, dearest Emily, 'well' will never again be my state. It was only last night that Mr. May could admit anything like real improvement. He and everybody regarded me as breaking fast—the faster for the good spirits, which consumed the oil of life so rapidly. Yesterday he said there was decided amendment, but it must always be—even if God see fit to prolong my days—an existence of the greatest caretaking and precaution. It is next to impossible for me to be visible before two o'clock, and by eight I am wholly exhausted. I can hardly crawl from room to room, and never expect to walk the length of my little garden again—am lifted in and out of a very low pony-carriage, and from step to step up-stairs to bed. Then, in bed, I cannot stir, and have all the length of the spinal column, all round the loins, and across the shoulders, a soreness which renders every position painful. It is just as if I had been soundly beaten, so that, after a little interrupted sleep, I am more fatigued in the morning than when I went to bed at night . . . . . .

Visitor upon visitor till four or five o'clock, then a quiet drive through the lanes, or leaving cards at different doors. Sometimes friends come from London, or France, or America, and then I contrive to spend with them the six or seven hours that the railway permits; but there must be an interval of a day betwixt, for the exhaustion of such visits is too great for two consecutive days, and I believe Mr.

May would be glad if I never saw anybody, but that is impossible; and I am quite sure that nine out of ten of my visitors think me actually well, for I get a bright colour as I talk, and never in my life were my spirits so good. And this, dear Emily, is a great blessing—and for many blessings have I to be thankful—to be watched and prescribed for by such a man as Mr. May, nursed as I am by K. and Sam and the whole family of Russell, and visited and cared for by everybody around, gentle and simple, and to know of old friends like you, and new friends like Mr. Starkey at a distance. I should be most wicked if I were not most thankful. How I should like to see your garden! Will you give me some of your hollyhock seed, and any other seeds that you have to spare? It will be a great favour. I love hollyhocks. Lady Russell has in a broad gravel walk that leads down her kitchen garden exquisite clumps of hollyhocks, twenty or thirty stalks of the same colour tied up together, of which the effect is wonderfully rich; but they are all from pink to red, and, although I shall have seeds from her, I think they do best from a distance. Her garden is exquisite—I mean the kitchen garden. From an old cloistered court at the back of the house you pass through iron gates and a rich grove-like orchard to other iron gates, beautifully wrought, and surmounted by a super-arch sculptured with fruit and flowers—almost covered with the Magnolia Grandiflora—into this old-fashioned kitchen garden of six acres, adorned on each side by wide flower-borders, with far within alternate hollyhocks and dahlias, backed up by espaliers, and finished by

six or eight hot and greenhouses. I should say that the path through the orchard and to it is bordered by alternate cypresses and tree-roses, like an eastern cemetery. I love that garden, to which the dear girls roll me in a chair. The house is very splendid, and the library one of the richest I have ever known.

I am in pain about this squabble with America; if it comes to fighting, it would seem to me like a civil war. Dear Mr. Fields says that the Americans are much amused with Daniel Webster's fish ebullition, on account of his known passion for fish in every way, for catching, cooking, and eating it. To have partaken of one of Daniel Webster's fish chowdas at Marshfield forms an epoch in an American's life. I had three friends here, each of whom at different times had enjoyed that honour. It is a sort of soup, composed of cod and other materials, and the great statesman leaves whatever guests he may have to compose it with his own hands. Dear Mr. Fields says that, if it comes to a war, he will side with England, as becomes a man who has eaten half a score of times whitebait at Blackwall. I must tell you a conversation he had with Carlyle at some great dinner (you know what a blusterer Carlyle is).

'So, sir, ye're an American?' quoth the self-sufficient Scotchman.

Mr. Fields assented.

'Ah, that's a wretched nation of your ain. It's all wrong. It always has been wrong from the vera beginning. That grete mon of yours—George' (did anyone under the sun ever dream of calling Washing-

ton George before?)—'your grete mon George was a monstrous bore, and wants taking down a few hundred pegs.'

'Really, Mr. Carlyle,' replied my friend, 'you are the last man in the world from whom I should have expected such an observation. Look at your own book on Cromwell! What was Washington but Cromwell without his personal ambition and without his fanaticism?'

'Eh, sir,' responded Carlyle, 'George had neither ambition nor religion, nor any good quality under the sun—George was just Oliver with all the juice squeezed out!'

I wish you had heard Mr. Fields tell this story. I have known many brilliant talkers, but never anyone that approached him. It is the triumph of meekness and animal spirits without noise or abruptness—full of enjoyment, and perfectly unconscious. His conversation is for your pleasure and his own, without an idea of display. Another thing in Carlyle displeased him far more; everyone knows that Emerson makes him a perfect idol, and it was thought that, if Carlyle cared for anyone in the world, it was for Emerson. I have heard it said of them they are not only like brothers, but like twin-brothers. Well, remember that Emerson and Hawthorne both live at Concord, and you will appreciate the kindness of Mr. Carlyle's speech.

'Isna there a place called Concord near ye? What like is it?'

'A pretty little New England town,' was Mr.

Fields' answer, 'of no political importance, but lively and pleasant as a residence.'

'Pretty!—lively!—ye ken I had fancied it to be a dull, dreary place, wi' a drowsy river making believe to creep through it, slow and muddy and stagnant, like the folk that inhabit it.'

So much for Mr. Carlyle, who has had the double misfortune of writing according to the humour—that is, the ill-humour of the moment, without the slightest regard to consistency and truth, and to be surrounded by none but admirers, or listeners borne down by mere noise. In England his fashion is waning rapidly, and I have no doubt but that, like most over-rated men, he will live to share the common fate of idols knocked down by his former worshippers in revenge of their own idolatry.

Mr. Fields is coming back in the spring, thank God! and means to bring Mr. Hawthorne with him. He wants him to write a romance on Sefton Court, with which he has been more struck than any other thing he has seen in England. He also hopes to bring Dr. Holmes, my pet of pets. I transcribed in a letter to Mr. Hawthorne what dear Mr. Starkey said of his works. Mr. Holmes (to whom I read it) says that it is the finest criticism that has been made on his style.

Did you happen to see an account of a fête offered by Dr. Lee to Mr. Layard (the Nineveh discoverer) and Mr. Bethell?[1] I know neither of them, but they joined Mrs. Acton Tindal in a pressing invitation that I should be present—she not knowing of my illness. Of course I could not go, and Mr. Layard was, she

[1] Afterwards Lord Westbury.

says, very much vexed; but that was nothing. Old Dr. Lee, who seems, from riches and kindness, and his grand Elizabethan place, to be a privileged person, got hold of an old Quakeress, a sort of combination of Mary Wollstonecraft, and Harriet Martineau, who made a harangue from a waggon on the rights, or rather wrongs, of women. The doctor wanted to put Mrs. Acton Tindal on the waggon also (a very sweet person, but rather a fine lady), and she and Mr. Layard had nearly run away before the banquet. Mr. Bethell stood it with the *sang froid* of a Chancery barrister. I should certainly have joined the runaway party. God bless you, my dear love! Remember me to all old friends, Elizabeth and the baby included.

Ever yours,

M. R. M.

On envelope—

Say everything for me to the dear Crowthers. How they recover! But then they are quiet, and they have each other to care for—a great inducement to getting well. How few people remain like them, married lovers to the end of their days!

MISS JEPHSON *to* DIGBY STARKEY, ESQ.

September 23, 1852.

MY DEAR MR. STARKEY,

So at last our great duke is dead! How ridiculous it is in the French papers (the *Patrie* and the *Presse*) to say that he does not deserve lasting fame, because, as they pretend, he refused to draw his sword for *Liberty*, which in his despite has triumphed

everywhere—as if France was free! Does not this remind you of Æsop's fable of the 'Mastiff and the Wolf'? and might not England, in reply to their boasting, point to their silenced Press and the suppression of the Assembly, as the wolf did to the marks of the collar to which the chain was attached round the neck of the mastiff?

I read the other day, in a number of 'Blackwood' which was lent to me, a story of Louis Napoleon which seems not improbable. It is stated that when he was in England some years ago, speaking of the amulet taken from the tomb of Charlemagne, which he then wore, he said that his wearing it might appear presumptuous, but that he had an internal conviction that he should one day be ruler of France; and in that case, though he had many friends in England whom he valued, it would be his object to accomplish what his uncle the emperor had planned, and that the conquest of England was his mission. Certainly the *Nation* gives him every encouragement which the promise of co-operation in Ireland can afford to fulfil it . . . .

I hope that Isabella is now quite well again, and that Emily continues to improve in health. You will, of course, see the illustrated edition of Miss Mitford's 'Recollections.' It must have been pleasant to her to have her taste for flowers so consulted and gratified by the Duke of Wellington. I am afraid she loves *les lis* too well, though I hope and believe not so well as *les roses*.

Ever, my dear Mr. Starkey, your affectionate sister,

EMILY E. JEPHSON.

MISS MITFORD *to* DIGBY STARKEY, ESQ.

September 24, 1852.

DEAR MR. STARKEY,

No! I have not read those works of Guizot. To tell the truth, it may be very meritorious, or at least very creditable, to read those philosophical historians, but it is very fatiguing; and there are certain cold, slow, dull writers, of whom Guizot and De Tocqueville may pass for the types, over whom I cannot help yawning for the life of me. Moreover, I consider Guizot himself as a solemn coxcomb with a good deal of the hypocrite about him. He is never weary of a certain self-laudatory sort of preaching, and yet was there ever a more unscrupulous minister—a man more ready to help his master through the dirtiest work? He does not seem to know good from evil, for a friend of mine, who is also a friend of his, asked me in '48 if another friend of mine, who buys first-rate pictures, was likely to purchase one which M. Guizot had brought with him from Paris. 'You may think that it is genuine,' said she, 'for I am desired by M. Guizot to say that it was presented to him by Queen Christina as a testimony of her gratitude for the part he took in the Spanish marriages.' The Spanish marriages! So that, instead of being ashamed of having that put upon record, he actually used it to enhance the value of his share of the spoil. Moreover, I have not read the French criticism on Shakespeare. If you have read Alfred de Vigny's 'Chatterton' (I mean the drama, not the story), you will see what those French people (he has translated 'Othello,' and is married to an Englishwoman) know of English

manners. You will find a young lord setting out from Holborn with his hounds (you are to hear them behind the scenes) on a fox-chase, and promising Kitty to bring eight or ten foxes' skins, when he returns from killing them, to make her a muff and tippet! And I believe that, little as he knows the English tongue, Lamartine (also married to an Englishwoman) knows less. The romantic drama is too wide a subject for to-night. One is provoked over Victor Hugo, who might have been so great a poet—and who *is* so great a poet, in those volumes of 'Lyrics,' which are little known in England, but in which the best French critics hold that he will chiefly live, and, in my poor mind, quite rightly. Still one is provoked with him, who might have been a very great dramatist, but for running into excesses which so diminish the power, even when they seem to heighten it. Still 'Le Roi S'Amuse' is a very great play.

With all his faults Victor Hugo is incomparably the best and greatest of the romantic dramatists. The only one that can compete with him is a person as different as possible, George Sand, whose 'Claudie,' a pastoral prose drama with a good deal of patois intermixed, is remarkable for the truth of the touch. It is free, too, from all that vile design of doing good, or making out this to be wrong, and that to be right, which I hold with you, dear Mr. Starkey, to be the most fatal fault of all fiction now-a-days. I am so glad to be fortified by your opinion, for I have waged twenty battles on the subject this winter and spring. It was the one fault of Miss Edgeworth that she wrote to a text. How much

better she wrote without one she showed in 'Belinda.' All the greatest writers of fiction are pure of that sin —Chaucer, Shakspeare, Scott, Jane Austen—and are not these precisely the writers who do most good as well as give most pleasure? Ah, I must give off. Tell dear Emily Jephson that I had somewhere or other half a letter written to her, that I love her always, that I am getting better, that I do not believe myself in danger, and that I will write to her when I can do so without making my head throb, or my hands burn. God bless you, dear friend.

Ever yours,

M. R. MITFORD.

MISS MITFORD *to* MISS JEPHSON.

October 25, 1852.

Did I tell you that my beloved friend Mr. Fields, the American publisher, had collected seven volumes of Mr. de Quincey's books dispersed over different magazines, and published them at Boston, and that the last thing before sailing he took down to him the author's profits on a sale of three thousand copies. Now this was the more noble and generous because to three letters from Boston conveying this offer, Mr. de Quincey had sent no answer whatever, and, even when this admirable edition was published, Miss de Quincey only wrote; however, on his arrival, they were mutually charmed. Mr. Fields said that Mr. de Quincey was the most courtly gentleman he had seen in Europe; this he wrote to me, adding that he spoke of me with great enthusiasm, and proposed to write to me; but no letter came, however, and so I

wrote to him. Yesterday I received a very charming letter from Miss de Quincey, saying that her father had not for many years been so gratified as by my letter, that he had begun an answer, which was already as long as a good sized pamphlet, but that she, knowing him of old, thought it likely that some time might elapse before it was sealed and delivered, and therefore sent hers as a precursor.[1] I think his prose the finest of any living writer, and I find that most judges of style are of my opinion.

Mrs. Browning has had a recurrence of cough, which prevented her from attending the christening of Alfred Tennyson's boy. It is called Hallam Tennyson, and Mr. Hallam stood in person, which is right on both sides. You know, of course, that the lamented of the 'In Memoriam' was the historian's son Arthur, that he was engaged to Miss Tennyson, and that after his death, and even after her marriage to another man, Mr. Hallam made her a large allowance. Arthur Hallam, though, would have been a prettier name. Mrs. Southey, also a sufferer from chest complaint, is shut up till June. I forgot to say that the Brownings have left London for Paris, where they will stay a week or two, and then proceed to Florence, Rome, and Naples. No doubt they will see the grand entry of the Prince President into Paris.

Did I tell you that I have been deeply interested lately by the production of an oratorio called 'Jerusalem' at Norwich. The composer is the brother of my beloved friend Hugh Pearson, Vicar of Sonning. It was a perfect triumph in the hall, and amongst the

[1] Printed in page 104 of this volume.

performers, but has not been done justice to by the Press, because the author was a gentleman! Henry Chorley, who gives the tone to the musical critics, had the audacity to tell me so. I doubt if I shall ever forgive him. He, the composer, left the Bar, for which he was educated, because his passion for music overmastered him, and has now given himself to it heart and soul. An enormous audience in the most musical city in England was chained in breathless attention for five hours, often melted into tears by the pathos of the music, and carried away by its grandeur, and, because he was well-born and highly educated, common justice is denied to him.

Truly of all the fine things that Louis Napoleon is doing for France, none, to my mind, is so valuable as the putting down of journalism!!! That vile engine, the Press, is to genius of modern times what the rack was of old. I abhor it, not on my own account—for to me it is civil enough—but on the score of my betters.

God bless you both, dear friends! I shall write on the other side a MS. charade (not to be printed or copied, mind) by Catharine Fanshawe, which I have sent to Mr. Dillon.

Ever most faithfully and affectionately yours,

M. R. MITFORD.

P.S.—Mrs. Browning is in a very bad way about being admitted to Florence. She doubts their letting her in; I am more afraid about their letting her out, on account of her book. I am expecting, on Tuesday, Bayard Taylor, the great American traveller and a

very charming poet. Those are his letters which are copied from the *New York Tribune* into 'Bentley's Miscellany.' He is only five days in England, and gives me one. On the 27th he embarks for India, China, Japan, and so homeward by the Pacific. He is still quite a young man—under twenty-eight—and a great friend of dear Mr. Fields. To-day I have a letter from the Whittington Club, begging my name to a subscription for a monument to Thomas Hood. His poems are his best monument; so it is rather to the credit of England than for his sake that one subscribes. Poor as I am I could not refuse myself the luxury of giving ten shillings, and I am sure that if everybody has the courage to give small sums, they will raise the £150 that they want. They have nearly the sum already. The movement will be made public in a few days. They wanted influential names first. This *is* a pamphlet, dear friend, *a la* De Quincey. But I have so many letters to write and people to see that I don't know when I may write again. Let me know how you are, dear Emily.

MISS FANSHAWE'S CHARADE.

Come, take a chair,
And set it there,
  Farther from the door.
Pray, pray,
Don't say nay,
  Eat a little more.
My first is said,
My second's red,
  My whole I'm sure you know.
It's cousin Pat,
And brother Mat,
  Aunt Jane and uncle Joe.

CHAPTER XIII.

LETTERS FROM MISS MITFORD TO MISS JEPHSON AND DIGBY STARKEY —POETRY.

MISS MITFORD *to* DIGBY STARKEY, ESQ.

October 25, 1852.

A LETTER from me to dear Emily Jephson, dearest Mr. Starkey (or rather to Emily and company) will reach you before long—a letter which is almost a book.

Do you know an Irishman, whose early books I used to read to my dear father, to our mutual delight —Mr. Lever? I have lived so much among sportsmen that I enjoy many books which women in general find *caviare*. Then I am told that the man is a constant spring of humour and good humour. Hablot Browne, the artist, to whom both Dickens and he owe so much, told me once that he spent three weeks with him in a most retired place in Belgium, and that his powers of amusement never flagged—a great contrast to Mr. Dickens himself, who is, I believe, not amusing at all. I have never seen either, but Mr. Lever and I interchanged tender messages,

being each of us surprised and pleased to find that the other relished our books. All the illness in the world never alters my good spirits . . . . . .

Always most affectionately yours,

M. R. MITFORD.

MISS MITFORD *to* MISS JEPHSON.

November 6, 1852.

Encouragement and praise are certainly, dearest Emily, the most unmercifnl taskmasters of this world, and they have done their office with me, or rather, are doing it, so that, tired out with an attempt at walking, I sit down to write to you by way of refreshment instead of going to bed. You will not wonder if the letter betray some signs of the weariness of the limbs. Before I forget it, Kindred is the word—kind-red. How, having once hit upon the solution, could you doubt? It seems to me as a charade the very best that I ever encountered. Praed's, excepting for their matchless grace, are generally bad—always excepting 'Donkey,' which was written to illustrate a beautiful engraving from a Spanish picture; a young lady, sitting on one of those creatures, which in Spain lose their vulgarity, her veil floating around her, and her bridle-rein held by a gallant cavalier.

This mention of Spain reminds me of Bayard Taylor, who sailed for Gibraltar last week, intending to travel all over Spain, and then to proceed to India, China, and Japan, and so home by the Pacific. He spent Tuesday here, and I find that I was mistaken

in thinking him a working-man. (Stoddard is so, and it was pleasant to hear the enthusiasm with which his friend, Bayard Taylor, spoke of him.) He is a person of no common learning, an excellent classical scholar, and speaking French, German, Italian, Spanish, and Arabic as well as his native tongue. He has visited spots in Central Africa that no European foot has trodden. Last winter he had little other society than that of a lioness, a panther, and two hyenas. The hyenas were to the last untamable, that is treacherous and uncertain, but the lioness was, he says, as much attached to him as a Newfoundland dog, and so was he to her. He was long in Syria, and speaks of the Jews of Jerusalem as being still a most noble and beautiful race; so like the paintings of the great Italian masters that it seems as if they had sat to them yesterday. A very clever person, and a very remarkable one is Bayard Taylor, and, I doubt not, as good as he is clever—but yet I did not fancy him. Mr. Fields has spoilt me. He is shy and gawky, long rather than tall (you know what I mean), and with a total absence of that strange, delightful thing called charm—which is to conversation what scent is to the rose.

Talking of Jews, my beloved friend, Miss Goldsmid, has just sent me a volume of sermons by Mr. Marks, the minister of a synagogue established about ten years since, which give a very interesting specimen of the reformed Jewish worship. Did you ever hear of it? Except that there were no practical abuses to sweep away, it is exceedingly like our reformation, casting aside all lesser authorities, as

Luther cast aside tradition, and abiding by the Old Testament wholly. It is still a religion of rites and symbols, but much less so than the unreformed worship. I wish you knew Miss Goldsmid. She is by far the greatest woman that I have ever known. Even her appearance is a complete triumph of mind over body, for she would be absolutely plain in face if it were not for the fine intellectual expression and the sweetness of the eyes; and clumsy in figure, but for the noble and dignified carriage, which would beseem a queen. Possibly this may proceed, however, from a certain habit of power. The riches of her father are past all count. He once told a friend of mine that he had seven large estates in England which he had never seen, and she herself has from an uncle four thousand a year, which is, of course, pocket-money in her father's house, and used, I have no doubt, for the noblest purposes. I wish I could show you her only literary effort—a translation of other Jewish sermons from the German of Dr. Solomons—worthy to be Christian discourses in their spirit of charity and brotherly love; and so finely rendered that William Harness, after reading one to me, said that he could not detect one symptom of translation, and that he only wished she would undertake (being a most perfect Hebrew scholar) that which is so much needed—a good Jewish version of the Old Testament. I am afraid that her father, who in liveliness and energy much resembled his friend, Lord Brougham, is breaking fast.

The poem that I enclose is from one of my chief spoilers, Mr. Bennoch, a most brilliant person, and

one who illustrates the character of this age. He is the head of a great Manchester house, a man with a very large fortune, with a sweet wife, and no children. He is a leading man in the Common Council, intending, I suppose, one day or other to represent the city, being, I am told, a very fine speaker. But his residence is at Blackheath, where he exercises an almost boundless hospitality, and does more good than anybody I know. His conversation is most brilliant. He has travelled over the greater part of Europe and America, and I need hardly tell you that, as a poet, he is equalled by very few. To me the delicious rhythm of those verses, their truth, and their healthiness is delightful, more delightful still is the transparent clearness of those lovely stanzas, most delightful of all the rare fact that he thinks nothing of his own great talent, but is often throwing off his whole heart into sympathy for others. He comes here, I think, at least once a month—often more frequently. Did I tell you that Marianne Skerritt told me that the most remarkable book at Windsor was a Gramont, richly and extensively illustrated by George IV., certainly the only English king, since the Stuarts, who had any taste.

Heaven bless you, dear love. This is really a volume.

Ever yours,
M. R. MITFORD.

Mr. Bennoch published a volume of poems, and the lines enclosed to Miss Mitford seem to have been the following, which have been found among her papers:—

Blackheath Park, September.

SMALL THINGS.

I dare not scan the precious things,
  The humblest weed that grows,
While pleasure spreads its joyous wings
  On every breeze that blows.
The simplest flower that hidden blooms,
  The lowest on the ground,
Is lavish of its rare perfumes,
  And scatters sweetness round.

The poorest friend still bears his part
  In life's harmonious plan,
The weakest hand may have the art
  To serve the stalwart man.
The bird that clearest, highest sings
  To greet the morning's birth,
Falls down to drink with folded wing
  Love's rapture on the earth.

From germs too small for mortal sight
  Grow all things that are seen,
Their floating particles of light
  Weave Nature's robe of green.
The motes that crowd the sun's warm rays
  Build sky, and earth, and sea,
The glorious orbs that round us blaze
  Are motes to deity.

Small duties grow to mighty deeds,
  Small words to thoughts of power,
Great forests spring from tiny seeds,
  As moments make the hour.
And life, with all its ebbs and flows,
  Howe'er its course be driven,
Like odour from the breathing rose
  Floats evermore to heaven.

FRANCIS BENNOCH.

When in England Mr. Fields stayed with Mr. Bennoch, and introduced him to Miss Mitford. He was already known to her through his poetry, and visited her for several years up to her decease. She assigned to him the arrangement of her dramatic volume.

MISS JEPHSON *to* DIGBY STARKEY, ESQ.

November 15, 1852.

MY DEAR MR. STARKEY,

I have part of an old letter of Miss Mitford's to send you. She wrote it when she hoped that Mr. Bentley would let her have engravings from Mr. Lucas' last portrait of her, one of which she intended to give me. The letter was laid aside *en attendant* the engraving, and forgotten for some time. Speaking of her favourite little boy, she says:

'By a strange coincidence this fair, golden-haired Saxon boy, with his blue eyes like two stars, the darkest, brightest blue eyes, and his complexion of lilies and roses, is in the whole contour of his head and face exactly the image of Louis Napoleon. The nose at present differs, of course, and the moustache, but the whole head and brow, the shape of the face, the moulding of the mouth and chin so unlike a child, are (in a fine bust of the Prince President, brought to me by Mr. Fields) an actual fac-simile of this boy's countenance—of course the child's head is most remarkable. Mr. Fields brought me also a companion bust—the other great man of France, Beranger, most genial, and venerable, and beautiful—and the two memoirs of Louis Napoleon. Mr. Fields, who saw much of him, and was close to him for two

hours at a ball at the Tuileries, is quite as enthusiastic about him as Mrs. Browning and I. So is dear old Lady Stanley, who was here yesterday. Mr. Fields says that he never saw such manners in his life, such dignity, such courtesy, such simplicity, such grace. Very handsome he calls him, much handsomer than those beautiful prints and that exquisite bust. He says it is a head so pale and earnest, so full of thought and feeling, that he should have stopped to watch it anywhere. The figure is eminently dignified and graceful, slight and easy. He is the best horseman in Paris, and has the finest foot and hand; moreover, he never forgets a benefit, and is just as simple and unaffected as he *was* twenty years ago—not changed at all, so say all who knew him then. I heard a charming anecdote of him the other day from a Bath lady, Professor Solly's sister. A friend of hers, a lady of rank, was placed next him at some great fête. He was most courteous, but reserved and silent, and she wanted to hear him talk. At last she remembered having been in Switzerland some years back, and having received kindness and attention from Queen Hortense. She mentioned this to him with admiration and gratitude. He turned to her at once. "Ah! madame, vous avez connue ma mère!" She stayed some months at Paris, loaded by Louis Napoleon with the many attentions and distinctions which his position permitted him to show her, and, whenever she attempted to thank him for his kindness, he stopped her at once by exclaiming, "Ah! madame, vous avez connue ma mère!"

'I hope to send you with this an engraving of Mr.

Lucas's exquisite picture, which I have given to Mr. Fields. Mr. Bentley wanted to purchase it of Mr. Lucas, who would not sell it, but presented it to me, and I gave it at once to the person in the world who is likely to value it most, from distance and from affection; for really he treats me as the Prince President would have treated his mother, if she had lived to be old. He is not, however, to carry it to America until Mr. Lucas shall have accomplished his design of painting a whole length of me in his studio, because, in case of my dying before that plan be executed, he could still make a full length from that portrait. At present it is in the hands of the engraver, who is retouching the plate, so that (unless Mr. Bentley repent his promise) I hope to have for my friends a better engraving than that in the magazine. Did I tell you what an avalanche of kindness has come to me from America? President Sparks and his lady want me to go there for two or three years, and live with them in their house and mine; and Longfellow, Hawthorne, Holmes—all the eminent persons have written to me, actually to me; some letters for me addressed to Mr. Fields are quite delightful from the warm-heartedness and the respect.'

MISS MITFORD *to* MISS JEPHSON.

Swallowfield, December 17, 1852.

I have just received, dearest Emily, a very beautiful book from America—from New York this time, not from Boston—'The Homes of American Authors.' The first thing that strikes one is the cosy and comfortable manner in which our brethren over the water

are housed. Nothing can be prettier than most of the houses, and the frontispiece, the interior of Mr. Everett's library, would be superb in the country seat of an English nobleman. I never can understand how these people come by their money. Edward Everett, for instance, the person in question, has really gone the *vole* in point of employment. One of his avocations was the having been for four or five years a preacher at one of their churches, and, although he has been subsequently Minister from the United States in England, yet their highest embassies are so poorly paid by the Republic that I have always heard that their diplomatists lost money by their functions. I suppose it is all right, but one cannot look at that lordly apartment, with its splendid bookcases, pictures, and busts, without wondering how such wealth came to the poor student.

There is no end to the contrasts in America. Bayard Taylor was telling me the story of a young poet of the name of Stoddard, still under thirty. His father was the captain of a small merchantman, which, with all the crew, himself included, was lost in the North Sea, leaving the only child so young, and the widow so poor, that (a most singular instance in the States) he had no more time for schooling than served him to learn to read, and taught himself to write some years after. He supported his mother by making moulds for iron castings; so he continued for a long while, in spite of most feeble health, until some of his poems becoming known, enabled him to add the earnings of his head to the labours of his hands. Now the marvel of this is that this poor lad

—an American, too—not only shows the highest genius—other low-born youths have done that—but a degree of taste and refinement rarely matched in modern poetry. More than that, some of his smaller and less powerful verse has about it an aroma of fashion and high breeding absolutely marvellous. Read these two stanzas, for instance; they have the perfume of a Court:—

'You know the old Hidalgo
(His box is next to ours)
Who threw the prima-donna
The wreath of orange flowers;
He owns the half of Aragon,
With mines beyond the main,
A very ancient nobleman
And gentleman of Spain.

'They swear that I must wed him,
In spite of yea and nay,
Though uglier than the Scaramouch,
The spectre in the play;
But I would sooner die a maid
Than wear a gilded chain,
For all the ancient noblemen
And gentlemen of Spain.'

He has written innumerable poems of far higher merit, but is not this wonderful for its high-bred air as coming from a maker of moulds for iron castings across the Atlantic? Did I tell you of the magnificent stanzas on the death of Daniel Webster, and that Daniel Webster was buried in full dress like Napoleon? One thing I am sure I did not tell you, for it has only just happened—that I had the pleasure of telling Mr. Hawthorne through Mr. Fields (for we do not regularly

correspond, and our tender messages pass through that medium) that a Russian literary man of eminence has translated his 'House of the Seven Gables' into Russian, and is printing it feuilleton-wise in a newspaper. One likes to send such a little bit of news as that. Also, dearest Emily, I forget whether I told you Mr. Bennett's 'Death March' is the best poem I have seen on the Duke of Wellington, although that is not saying much. For fear that I did not, I enclose you a copy now. The author spent two or three days here this week . . .

I had a long letter from Marianne Skerritt the other day giving an account of Count Walewski's arrival at Osborne under a royal salute to receive the Queen's recognition of the Emperor. Marianne is as enthusiastic on the subject as I am, and says 'He is the most extraordinary man I ever heard of!' What a fairy tale it is! You know, I suppose, that Count Walewski is the natural son of the first emperor by a Polish lady so often mentioned in the memoirs. Ten years ago he was splendidly handsome, now he is becoming almost too stout. The mother was exquisitely beautiful, and he took more after her than his illustrious father, except in the general look of his head. Have you ever read 'Esmond'? William Harness (a friend of the author's) says 'I hate it,' James Payne says 'I took it with me into the Theological Halls and listened to the professor by preference.' I dislike all the love parts exceedingly, and I feel it tiresomely long, and I dissent from much of the criticism, but bits are good, especially the 'Mock Spectator.'

Heaven bless you both, my dear friends. Love to the Crowthers and Elizabeth. (I wish our affair were over.)

Ever affectionately yours,
M. R. MITFORD.

MISS JEPHSON *to* MR. STARKEY.

January 12, 1853.

MY DEAR MR. STARKEY,

Here is a delightful letter from dear Miss Mitford. She is like lavender, the sweeter the more it is bruised. How wonderful are her spirits and energy after such an accident! You see that your letter has not vexed her, though it has not converted her; *that* I believe is impossible. What strange inconsistency there is in being so tenacious of the civil rights of citizens as to hold that Mahomedans, Jews, and Hindoos as citizens have a claim to sit in an English Parliament, while she applauds the French for choosing a ruler who has deprived them of the right to speak, or, I believe, to travel from one part of France to another with freedom . . . I am glad she is thinking of a second series of 'Recollections.' She cannot be idle; it would be death to her. Only think of four hundred volumes of French books! Belinda's twelve French romances richly gilt were nothing to it.

Enclosure:—

To-day, my very dear Emily, brought me your dear letter, and one equally charming from dear Mr. Starkey. You must send this to him, for reasons which you will soon discover. Ah, you little know the plight of your poor old friend! Nearly three

weeks ago (I sat writing on Saturday night) last Monday fortnight I had a most serious accident—an overturn;[1] I was thrown violently from my little pony-chaise on the hard road in Lady Russell's park; no bones were broken, and nothing hurt but myself, but the nerve of the side—especially that called the *circular* nerve which goes round the shoulder bone—and the nerves of both hips were so much bruised and lacerated, and the shock of the system was so great, that even ten days after the accident Mr. May could not satisfy himself that there was neither fracture nor dislocation until he made a most minute and searching examination, and I am writing to you at this moment with my left arm bound tightly to my body and no power of raising either foot from the ground. I am lifted into bed, and lifted out of bed, and lifted up in bed, and cannot, do what I may, effect the slightest change of posture, the muscular power of the lower limbs seems completely gone. Mr. May says that this accident has fallen upon the person in the world who, from previous feebleness and neuralgic affection, was most likely to feel it severely, but that he still entertains hopes that I may be restored to the state (such as it was) in which this mischance found me. So much for the bad; now for the consolation. Nobody else was hurt, nobody to blame; the two parts of me that are quite uninjured are my head and my right hand. I had just got four hundred volumes of French books. K. is safe in bed, and Sam is really everything in the way of help that

[1] This is her second overturn in a pony-carriage; she escaped with less hurt from the first.—E. JEPHSON.

a man can be, lifting me about, and wheeling me about, and directing a stupid old nurse and a giddy young maid with surprising foresight and sagacity. I need not tell you how kind everybody is; poor Lady Russell comes every day through mud, and rain, and wind (for you are not to imagine that you had all the storm to yourselves; she had above a hundred trees blown down in her park—among the rest an oak of remarkable beauty, belonging to an avenue cut down when Lord Clarendon built the present mansion, had his noble head fairly taken off—a broad-browed oak such as Scott describes in the opening of 'Ivanhoe'). Everybody comes to me, everybody writes to me, everybody sends me books. Mr. Bentley has done me good by giving me something to think of in writing no less than three pressing applications for a second series of 'Recollections,' and, although I am forbidden anything like literary composition, and even most letter-writing, yet it is something to plan and consider over. I shall (if it please God to grant me health and strength to accomplish the object) introduce several chapters on French literature, and am at this moment in full chase of all Casimir Delavigne's ballads. Do you know them? They are of matchless beauty, which he seems never to have suspected, for a very few are printed in his 'Poesies,' the rest being scattered here and there; one which I read you eight years ago, of which the refrain is, 'Chez l'Ambassadeur de France,' I especially want—but indeed I want them all. Also do you know the great satirical poet, Auguste Barbier? Him I have—I mean his works—but I want his

recent personal history. The last thing I heard of him was his being bought off by Louis Philippe. I almost suspect that he must be dead, for else we should have heard of him rampant under Ledru Rollin, and sent about his business by Napoleon; for I am sorry to say that he was a great anti-Napoleonist, so far as the old Emperor was concerned. But he was a very great satirical poet for all that. Of course I shall be obliged to leave out lines and bits of lines in every stanza of his; for those Frenchmen call things by very plain names, just as much as our English writers did in the Augustan age of Queen Anne.

This brings us to 'Esmond.' Had I read it when I wrote to you? It seemed to me, besides the disgusting love-story, very long and tedious, and full of common-place and very false criticism—preferring Addison to Steele, and decrying that wonderful master of English style, Bolingbroke. All the best judges seem to dislike the book—at least, all who have mentioned it to me. John Ruskin is a man of a different sort. In his first passage he breaks away from all models, and produces morsels of word-painting that it would be difficult to exceed. Then he is so conscientious a writer. For the last volume of the 'Stones of Venice,' which he expects to finish in March, and which, his father says, will be much finer than the first, he spent above a year sketching and measuring upon the spot. By-the-way, he has a great contempt for the modern Italians. He wrote to me last summer that the women's heads were good for nothing but to stick flowers in, and the

men's to hang beards to; and, at the bottom of her heart, I expect Mrs. Browning to have the same feeling. Over and over she has said of them to me, 'My Italians are too soft.' That book, the 'Casa Guidi Windows,' is a book without convictions—one feels that as one reads it. She took up the subject because she had a mind to be an Italian George Sand, and because it was something to write about, and that's all. Tell Mr. Lever that there are few people in the world to whom I feel more grateful than to him. My father, who was no literary man, but whose taste was about the surest that I have ever known, found no pleasure during the last half dozen years of his life but in listening to my reading. Besides the best comedians and natural history, I used to find great difficulty to get books that he would listen to. Of writers of fiction, he had only pleasure in Smollett and Fielding, Scott, Miss Austen, the 'Pickwick Papers,' some of Mr. James's works, and Mr. Lever's. I think, of all modern novels, he liked 'Harry Lorrequer,' 'Charles O'Malley,' and 'Jack Hinton' best. He used to say (and I am entirely of his mind) that nobody but a gentleman could have written them. He was a great sportsman, and I, who have lived amongst fox-hunters and coursers all the days of my life, feel how much health, and power, and manliness the habit of field-sports gives to a writer. Besides which, he is so genial an Irishman! By-the-way, dear Mr. Starkey, what is the feeling in Dublin about Mr. Kirwin? In London I am told that the impression is decidedly that there was nothing like proof of the murder;

and that was decidedly mine on reading the report of the trial in the *Times*, before anybody had written a word about it. I doubt the screams being heard that distance, and am fully persuaded that the fact of the man's being a wretched husband influenced all the people concerned—the witnesses, the judge, and the jury.

Now for a little American news. Hawthorne, who was an old class-fellow of the new president at college, and has been his neighbour at the little town of Concord (where, by-the-way, Emerson has also lived for the last two years), sees Mr. Pierce every day, and will certainly hold high office under him. Three years ago he was literally starving. Two or three of my correspondents, of different politics, all say that no European can ever imagine the scramble for place, and the dirty intrigues which take place every five years under the model Republic. Have not the French done wisely to select for themselves a man whose name and whose high ability will preserve them from such struggles. They say that *he* greatly dislikes the Tuileries. His health is not strong, and the garden of the Elysée was a comfort, and almost a necessity to him. Of our new ministry, I have heard one result from the very highest authority, Miss Goldsmid. She says that the admission of Jews to Parliament is now certain. The death of the duke will make a great difference in the Lords, and other circumstances besides the coalition ministry render the carrying the measure certain. This prospect has greatly revived her father, who was dying of heart

complaint. He was the real man of the movement from first to last: had given it half the energies of a most energetic life, and it is well that he should see the cause triumph at last. I go with him entirely, holding that every citizen has a claim to enjoy civil rights, were he Mahomedan or Hindoo.

And now, dear friend, I think I have disobeyed Mr. May quite enough. God bless you both! The sight of that storm must have been almost grand enough to have made amends for the discomfort.

Ever faithfully and affectionately yours,

M. R. MITFORD.

In a letter, dated January 19, 1853, Miss Jephson alludes to the project of publishing her great-uncle's letters—

The transcribing parts of Miss Mitford's letters has been quite a pleasure to me, bringing back so vividly there collection of the happy time at Binfield when I received them—the visits to Three Mile Cross, from which we were separated by about ten or twelve miles of beautiful park-like country, which once had been part of Windsor Forest, and her visits in the long summer days to Binfield Park, where there was so much to see that interested her, pictures and prints—some of the latter had belonged to Mr. Malone, and were valuable—and Sir Joshua's portraits of Dr. Johnson and of dear Lady Sunderland, so like and so beautiful.[1] If you like, I will send you an

[1] Miss Mitford seems to have become acquainted with Lady Sunderland through Miss Jephson before 1852.

extract in every letter from Miss Mitford's exhaustless stores.

I do not quite recollect how it was that the plan of *the* book died away, but you will see that doubts of its success were stealing upon her, and then there was the *necessity* of finishing her play, and other engagements, which had been interrupted by this new project. As years passed away, her father's illness and writing for his support occupied all her thoughts and time.

Extract from a letter of Miss Mitford here copied by Miss Jephson:—

'What I contemplate is asking Mr. Colburn if he would like such a book, if he thinks it would answer, and what he would give for it, and not binding myself to him, with an understanding that it might come out in the winter or spring of 1832; this would give us time to look for more letters and more *jeux d'esprit.* Did you find the confessions of Jean Baptiste Couture? What I think is this: if we could make one volume of the life, correspondence, and desultory poems and prose, and another of the plays, the four tragedies which we have, and of the farces, as many as we can find, to be published either together or as Colburn might choose.'

Extract from another letter:—

'Mr. Talfourd says that he will apply to Colburn whenever I like, but that I must give Otto the precedence. He has got your uncle's plays, and has read the "Count de Narbonne" and the "Italian Lover,"

which he thinks full of good writing, but not very dramatic. There is, however, little doubt of Colburn's taking the work. Single-speech Hamilton's letters, and your father's sketch of the life, will be invaluable acquisitions. I have desired W. Harness to ask Mr. Kemble and Mrs. Siddons if they can give us any help, which I think not unlikely, especially in the affair of the "Conspiracy."'

Extract from another letter:—

'W. Harness certainly underrates the plays. His taste is a little warped by his love of the poetry of Joanna Baillie's style. I would rather far have written the last act of the 'Italian Lover,' with its fine conception, its admirable conduct, its passion, and its intensity, than all the plays on the passions put together. The fact is that Joanna Baillie had imbued her mind with the fine rich style of the old writers, and had herself a fancy full of poetical imagery; but she entirely wanted construction, had less of character than Mr. Jephson, and had not an idea of that real and great thing, stage effect (of course I do not mean pageants and processions), but the turns of fortune and development of story in which Shakespeare is quite as unrivalled as in his individuality of character and poetry of diction. If Mr. Jephson's plays be less poetical than Joanna Baillie's, they are more eloquent, and eloquence seems to me far more akin to passion than mere beauty of imagery, however delightful. I am quite sorry that William is not coming that we might fight the battle out. One proof is that Mr. Jephson's plays did act successfully

(in spite of the recumbent statue), and that Joanna Baillie's do not. Do write for the Life and for Horace Walpole's letters—I can't bear the thought of giving up the scheme.'

MISS MITFORD *to* MR. STARKEY.

January 31, 1853.

Thank you earnestly, dear Mr. Starkey, for your most kind note and for Mr. Lever's, which I venture to retain. I, like him, set little store by praise (always excepting general popularity)—I mean that I set little store by individual praise, except it come from a quarter for which I have myself a considerable value, and Mr. Lever is of those few. I know no writer whose works are so unmistakably those of a gentleman. They say that the Irish gentleman is the ideal of that word in mind and manner, and really in his books there is the confirmation of the theory. The English novels of these days seem to me the more detestable the one than the other—Dickens all cant (Liberal cant, the worst sort) and caricature; Thackeray all cynicism, with an affectation of fashionable experience; and the lady-writers, the Miss Jewsburys, the Miss Lynns, and *tutte queste*, emulous of the passion and doing of George Sand, without her grossness, but also without her genius and her beauty.

When you come to know me, you will be amused at your own fears about my spirits. I am a very proverb of cheerfulness. William Harness says that, so long as I breathe, so long shall I talk all manner

of gaiety. Mr. May complains that he never can tell how I am, because my conversation is so deceiving. My maid K. orders people away, because, so long as I have company, I wear myself out with my good spirits. High animal spirits, that great gift of God, have sustained me through a life of anxiety and labour, hardly perhaps to be paralleled in the long list of poor authors. The fact is that you are probably amongst the many who, never having experienced or witnessed the state, are happily ignorant how very much worse than a broken bone, or than two or three broken bones, is a severe injury to the principal nerves of the principal joints—how very much more painful, and how infinitely more tedious and more difficult to cure. For about a month my left arm was tied up in one shawl slingwise, and bound lightly to my body with another, to prevent the terrible pain which the slightest motion sent upward and downward through the limb and the whole side. That is now going on favourably, and there is little doubt but the use of the arm will be slowly and gradually recovered. But the lower limbs are even now (above six weeks after the accident) so affected that I can neither stand nor put one foot before the other. I am lifted into bed, and out of bed, and up in bed, cannot turn when there, nor make the slightest motion; have quite for the present lost all muscular power, retaining great and constant pain; and Mr. May says that until warm weather, until the spring shall be fairly set in, I must continue as I am —just lifted into a great-chair, and wheeled to the fireside, without even attempting to leave the room.

You will admit that this terrible helplessness, attended as it is with constant sleeplessness, is no fanciful evil—everybody is astonished at my good spirits. But these injuries to the principal nerves are most serious. Only last week a near neighbour of mine, a young and active man, in a fall from his horse in hunting, bruised one of the nerves connected with the spine, and was for twenty-four hours in imminent danger of lock-jaw. He is now recovering.

Adieu, dear friend. I am now hunting for a ballad of Casimir Delavigne's, of which the refrain is 'Chez l'Ambassadeur de France.' If you meet with it, do not fail to send it to me. It is short.

Ever faithfully yours,

M. R. MITFORD.

MISS MITFORD *to* MISS JEPHSON.

March 8, 1853.

I don't know, dearest Emily, whether I told you that Mr. Huddleston, the head of one of our great Catholic families, was in despair at the Emperor's marriage. He had followed the empress from Spain to Paris when he was recalled by the illness of his father. The father died, and he was about to return to France and throw himself and his £40,000 a year at her feet when the Emperor stepped in and carried off the prize. A friend of mine saw a portrait of her on horseback at his house last week. Lady Russell, herself a Frenchwoman, hears from Paris that one of the libels they wish suppressed was based on the statement that the Spanish grandee who married the empress's mother, was a most wretched, deformed

little creature. I shall now transcribe for you a passage concerning her in Mrs. Browning's last letter. 'I wonder if the Empress pleases you as well as the Empéror. I approve altogether, none the less that he has offended Austria, in the mode of arrangement; every cut of the whip in the face of Austria being a personal compliment to me—at least, so I consider it. Let him head the democracy, and do his duty to the world, and use to the utmost his great opportunities. Mr. Cobden and the Peace Society are pleasing me infinitely just now in making head against the immorality (that's the word) of the English press. The tone taken up towards France is immoral in the highest degree, and the invasion cry would be idiotic, if it were not something worse. The Empress, I heard the other day from the best authority, is charming, and good at heart. She was educated at a respectable school at Bristol, and is very English, which does not prevent her shooting with pistols, leaping gates, driving four-in-hand, or upsetting the carriage when the frolic requires it—as brave as a lion, and as true as a dog. Her complexion is like marble, white, and pale, and pure; her hair light, inclining to sandy—they say she powders it with gold dust for effect—but her beauty is more intellectual and less physical than is commonly reported. She is a woman of very decided opinions. I like all this—don't you?—and I like her letter to the Préfet, as everybody must. Ah! if the English press were in earnest in the cause of liberty, there would be something to say for our poor, trampled-down Italy—much to say—I mean, under

my eyes is a people really oppressed, really groaning its heart out; but these things are spoken of with indifference.' So far Mrs. Browning. She tells me also that her husband's play, 'Colombe's Birthday,' is to be produced at the Haymarket in April, with Miss Helen Fawcett that was (I forget her new name) as the heroine. Also she is very curious on the subject of the American rappings. So I have written to Mrs. President Sparks, whose husband has just sent me two capital trimmings of Lord Mahon, who criticised the great edition of 'Washington's Writings,' which he, the president, had brought out, and who is (I mean Mrs. President) of all my American correspondents, the one most likely to enter heart and soul into the rapping question. I don't suppose Dr. Holmes or Mr. Fields believe any more of it than they do of the Cock Lane ghost.

N.B.—I send you also a scrap of James Fields' letter, just arrived to Mr. Bennoch, which he dutifully forwarded to me, and which I have of course returned. It is just exactly a bit of the man himself, who is, beyond all manner of doubt, the brightest piece of sunshine that ever came in my path. You see he has even taken Thackeray's fancy, who is anything but an enthusiast. If I could find it, I would also send you a letter from Paris, describing the wedding, and the exceeding beauty of the city, which is becoming more splendid from day to day; but that letter has gone astray among my wilderness of papers, and I can only tell you two nice pieces of news—that young Alexandre Dumas, is said to be one of the persons

incarcerated for libel, and that Lamartine is utterly ruined, for which one is sorry, with all his youth, and his age, and with his broken health. There must have been great extravagance, as there was with by far the greatest of those French writers, Balzac, and is with Dumas; for all three have earned immensely, and neither had any claims of rank, or of large families, or of anything except habits of luxury and expense to account for their profusion. Did I tell you of a very interesting picture which Miss James happened upon in London last year. She was going to see a mutual friend of hers and mine, a very remarkable single woman, of the name of Crenering (?), who shares a large house with Mr. Phillips, the portrait-painter, in George Street, Hanover Square. Whether she mistook the door, or whether she went purposely into one of Mr. Phillips's rooms, I don't know, but she found herself in front of a St. Cecilia picture—a most intellectual and spiritual-looking woman sitting at an organ, apparently absorbed by the music which she was producing from the instrument, but looking upward, and so attenuated that the spirit seemed about to leave the body. It was Lady Lovelace, as she last played the organ—her farewell to music—painted for Lady Byron. Nobody but the family had seen, or were to see it.

Do you see the *Times*? and, if so, do you remember certain letters signed 'An Englishman,' abusing my dear Emperor. Those letters had a tone of authority which might have become not merely a judge or a bishop, but a cardinal or Lord Chancellor. Well,

they were written by an undergraduate at Oxford, a lad called Vernon Harcourt, whom our lad here, George Russell, whom his mother and I pet and scold all day long, talks of as his junior. I'm not sure that he was not his fag at Eton. I cannot tell you how much this has amused me. The letters were inflated and bombastic enough for Tom Thumb, but there was an air of grandeur about them which must have taken in the *Times*. What a fool the lad was not to keep his own secrets! God bless you, dear love! I'm no better.

Ever yours,
M. R. MITFORD.

Enclosed in the above letter is the following extract from a letter from Mr. Fields to Mr. Bennoch, February, 1853:—

'Well, how are you all at Blackheath? Does the sun shine upon you and yours as usual? Are leaves flitting about your dwelling—I mean, the poetical ones? As the winter draws near its close I begin to look over the waves towards the English shore. I feel weary, and my dreams are of lanes and cottages and railroad trains to Greenwich and Blackheath. I think I hear every morning the voice of Ellen warning me that it is seven o'clock. I shake hands with old Yankee friends and call them Bennoch, and Mackay, and Somers, and Riggs. I am continually ordering whitebait for dinner, in a land where such things are not, I talk of going to the Opera and the Princess's, and the people about me don't understand what I mean. I count my dollars

and cents in pounds and shillings and pence, and the shopkeepers think I am mad—in short, the English fever has again laid hold of me. I am completely in its power. I do not dare say a word about "going over the waters to Bennoch," but I look at my partners with a woe-begone face every time the steamer leaves our port. The truth is, I fear Ticknor and Reed will never consent to my leaving again for Europe. We are all plunged lip deep in traffic, and my presence here is most important. I hope and pray the spring may not pass without my walking down the Strand.

'Thackeray is having a fine reception in the States. He took quite a fancy to your humble servant, and when he left Boston wrote me the most friendly letter, accompanied by a splendid silver drinking goblet as a memorial of our friendship.

'Do you often see Miss Mitford? That sad accident made everybody feel sad. Holmes, Hawthorne, and Longfellow deeply regretted it.'

CHAPTER XIV.

LETTERS FROM MISS MITFORD TO MISS JEPHSON AND DIGBY STARKEY.

MISS MITFORD *to* DIGBY STARKEY, ESQ.

March 13, 1853.

MY DEAR MR. STARKEY,

I have written two or three letters to dear Emily, and trusted to her habit of copying them for their reaching you. I do that with some American friends, and one dear, busy friend does so with Mr. Bennoch and myself. My excuse is always an overwhelming correspondence, and just now I have another reason for abridging writing as much as may be. My three months' confinement to one dusty, smoky room, and the quantity of ashes caused by perpetual fires has occasioned a weakness of the eyes, which startles me a little, although it will probably cease with the cause. For the rest I am no better, but, as far as pain goes, perhaps worse than before the late cold weather. However, the spring is really coming now, and I must wait its effects with patience. I rejoice in the amendment of Mr. Starkey. It has been a most

trying season—between accident and illness not a family in this neighbourhood has escaped.

Your outpouring of feeling on Mr. Layard's most interesting book is by far the most eloquent that I have met with—eloquence of truth and of heart, as well as of talent. Besides all that you say, it suggested to me the astonishing adaptability of different intellects to pursuits the most difficult, and apparently the most untempting; Cuvier collecting fossil bones, and re-creating the grisly monsters of a former state of existence; Layard delving extinct cities from the mounds of the desert; Dr. Hirsch deciphering lost languages to which there did not seem the slightest clue. These men seem born for their work. I heard of Mr. Layard last week. He is gone to Constantinople to join Lord Stratford—I suppose in some diplomatic capacity. Personally I do not know him, but he is much with a dear friend of mine, and we interchange messages. He seems to be different from what his doings would lead one to expect, a very refined and courtly person, shrinking from the slightest touch of ridicule, rather than the bold adventurer which one would look for in the man who gained every step of his great discoveries at the cost of a contest with the Arabs. They speak of him as a charming person, but this is the notion I have gained from several anecdotes. Mr. Justice Talfourd has sent me from Oxford (he mentioned it at Reading, where indeed he was so pressed by business that he could not get to me) a new tragedy, called the 'Castilian,' printed, but not published, and at present, to use his own words, 'a very private sin, having only been given to eight or

ten persons.' It is more like 'Ion' in the writing than either of his other plays, and is grounded on the Revolt of Toledo, under Don John de Padilla in the early part of the reign of Charles V.

You must ask dear Emily for an interesting account of the Empress sent to me by Mrs. Browning. I enclose at the risk of her also transcribing it, a curious instance of figures turning into a word, and that word a prophecy,[1] and I add a story I heard yesterday that the Empress shot thirty-three brace of partridges one morning at St. Cloud, being, added my informant, in spite of that so sweet and charming a creature that any man might fall in love with her.

Adieu, dear friend.

Ever yours,
M. R. MITFORD.

MISS MITFORD *to* MR. STARKEY.

June 2, 1853.

Never dream of apologizing to me, dear Mr. Starkey, for fits of silence. Scott in one of those charming introductory epistles to 'Marmion,' which are full of the common natural feelings which, if expressed before, have never been half so well expressed—talks of pursuing a ramble with a friend sometimes in chat,

[1] The numbers for the election of President of France in favour of Louis Napoleon were

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Look through the back of this against the candle or the fire, or any light.

sometimes in 'jovial silence,'—and I am sure that this feeling of entire liberty, whether in conversation or in correspondence—the not being expected either to talk or to write for civility's sake—is amongst the most enduring privileges of friendly intercourse. Besides, we hear of one another through dear Emily, who may be safely trusted to transmit whatever is worth telling from one to the other. I see that she has sent you Dr. Holmes' stanzas on Moore, which are so curiously like the writer they commemorate that one would think he had dictated them through a 'medium,' if the charming American were not a scoffer at the spirits and their rappings. So indeed are all my American friends, and they tell me that the thing is dying away across the Atlantic. In Italy they are better believers. Mrs. Browning tells me that Robert Owen of Lanark has been converted to a belief in the immortality of the soul by these spirit rappings. Now knowing Robert Owen, I think that he would most assuredly have been converted without them, for he, in spite of his crotchets, is a thoroughly kind and honest man, who has no interest in disbelieving a future state. Well, I doubt if you be rapping in Dublin, but of course you are table-turning. All the world is so employed, and that great *fait accompli* flourishes pre-eminently in Swallowfield. The young Russells are surcharged with electricity; the girls cannot take off a flannel petticoat but it crackles, or brush their hair in the dark but it emits sparks like a cat. Of course under their manipulation tables spin like teetotums. One thing, however, is curious. It had been held that any metal prevented the opera-

tion, and trinkets were discarded accordingly. The other night one of the young ladies, in the midst of the evolutions of a rosewood table, suddenly proposed to remove their rings and bracelets; they paused for a moment to do so, and the table paused also, but the moment they replaced their thumbs and fingers on the wood it began turning again as rapidly as ever *the reverse way!* If anything could be more unaccountable than another where all is a puzzle this manœuvre would seem so. I suppose it must be electricity, or magnetism, or some new fluid of which the agency has hitherto been unknown. Of the fact there is no doubting, nor of nervous people being far more charged with it than others.

I am still very lame, carried, or rather lifted, step by step up and down stairs and into bed, and unable to stir when recumbent, almost to move when seated. Besides this, I am all over as sore as if I were pounded in a mortar, and, although quite as cheerful as ever, yet paying for temporary excitement by exceeding weakness afterwards. In short I am as infirm, as feeble, and as lively as it is well possible for a woman to be. I am got into the air, and I enjoy it so much that I cannot but hope that it must eventually do me good. It seems to me that never was the marriage of May and June, which is always the loveliest moment of the year, so beautiful as now. The richness of the foliage in our deep-wooded lanes, the perfume of the bean-fields, the luxuriant blossoming of all sorts of flowering trees. I have some lilacs of both colours, especially the white, which I would match against those of which Horace Walpole was so fond

at Strawberry Hill. We have curious things too in our hedgerows—natural puzzles. Our hollies hereabout are almost trees, and one, whilst his fellows are covered with pale flowers, has retained all the coral berries which the birds ought to have eaten in the winter. Why is this?

Of all your exhibition the wisest part seems to me the picture-gallery. But I suppose anything is wise which carries people to Ireland and the fine scenery, which is worth all the exhibitions under the sun. If you have a command of French books read Saint Beuve's 'Causeries du Lundi,' charming volumes, full of variety and attraction in every way.

Ever, dear friend, faithfully yours,

M. R. MITFORD.

MISS MITFORD *to* DIGBY STARKEY, ESQ.

July, 1853.

I thank you from the bottom of my heart, my dear and kind friend, for the great favour which you propose to do me, which you have done me, for the pleasure of seeing those two kind words in print will hardly equal that of seeing them in your own handwriting. Thank you again and again. We get choice in praise as we grow old, prizing it according to the estimation we set upon the praiser, and measured by that scale these lines have indeed a high value! I only wish that you were here that an honest and warm grasp of the hand might tell the feelings of the heart. 'Haydon's Life' has not yet reached me. The family wanted me to edit it (the actual editor is Professor Tom Taylor, the man of *Punch*), but the book will

tell you why I refused. I knew poor Haydon quite well enough to be sure that there would be much that would hurt the feelings of many. At the time when I and others—my betters,—as if by common accord, hailed him in sonnets, he held forth a promise in painting which he never kept . . .

His conversation was singularly brilliant, fearless, bold, original, full of impulse, and of the keenest observation of character, dashed with a certain coarseness of accent too much in accord with coarseness of mind. The faculty he always wanted was taste, and that is an ominous deficiency, for surely taste is even more a moral than an intellectual quality. I am very curious to see that book. Before leaving the subject of Henry Chorley (of the 'Athenæum,' you know), he told me that 'Villette' is the actual experience of Miss Brontë. She went over to Brussels, becoming what he calls 'an usher' in a Belgian school, and encountered most of the persons she describes. Strange persons they are—wonderful in these smooth days, and yet men and women after all. Mrs. Jameson is the incarnation of one of the worst things in this age, the spirit of coterie. Oh, how wise Scott was in avoiding that snare!

I must tell you what has three times befallen me this last week. My maid K., in putting me to bed, burst into a storm of exclamations, all referring to the candlestick; I looked, and saw nothing but a dingy caterpillar about half an inch long. It moved, and a little bright star of bluish greenish light was reflected on the silver. It was a glowworm! We extinguished the candle, and the candlestick was

sent to one of the grass plots in front of the house, and in about ten minutes the beautiful insect had crawled out upon the turf. Four nights after, exactly the same thing occurred, and another glowworm was found on one of the lower windows. We can only account for these visits to the candlestick by the circumstance of there being both nights a little jar of fresh-gathered pinks upon the table. But none have been found among the pinks in their own home, the garden, nor did I ever hear of a glowworm indoors. Did you? K., who is full of pretty sayings, will have it that, now that I—always so fond of those stars of the earth—can no longer go to see them, they come to visit me. I am no better, and paid for the pleasure of two or three visits to me lately by never closing my eyes the night before or the night after their arrival. Neither can I rise from my seat, or stand, or walk, or turn in bed. It is a very wearisome and painful helplessness, but I bless God that I have many alleviations—there always are, I think, to every trial, if we will but look for them. Besides all this, I am much engaged, partly with correspondents, who, not being dear friends, cannot be put aside.

May I ask you to lend this letter to dearest Emily? She will accept it as one to her. Adieu, dear friend.

M. R. MITFORD.

MISS MITFORD *to* MR. STARKEY.

Swallowfield August 18, '53.

This is a note of adieu, dear Mr. Starkey, to you and dearest Emily, for I have concluded the agreement for the two works, and must abstain from all

correspondence until both be completed. Although quite separate, the publications will, for advertising and bookselling reasons, appear nearly together. God grant me strength to do justice to myself and the publishers, who have behaved admirably throughout. Haydon's book is the work of the year. It has completely stopped the sale of Moore's, which really might have been written by a Court newspaper or a Court milliner. You would have liked Haydon; you could not have helped yourself. Mr. Bennoch, who was here Saturday with the Kingsleys, and Mr. Ticknor (I wish you had been of the party) said of him: 'He seldom kept his promises to me, but he always tried to do so, which morally is the same thing.' Was not this fine in Mr. Bennoch? He is a splendid person, full of talent and intelligence and genial pleasantry, but with a certain calm dignity, the fruit, I suppose, of constant right-doing. Hawthorne was to have come with them, but being a personal and most obliged friend of the President (his post, nominally worth 2,000 dollars, is really worth 5,000), he thinks it right to obey the ordinance for consuls to stay in their places, so that he has not been in London yet, and will not come till the end of the month. Then I shall see him. I will tell him what you say. It is a fine and a just criticism. Mr. Ticknor himself and most superior men say that I shall like him. He will not do to be lionized, or even drawn out, but when he likes his company he comes out himself, and is often really brilliant. Mr. Ticknor says that the rappings have driven so many people to the madhouse that there is a question in the States of forbidding such

practices by law. Mrs. Browning believes in them. The world have believed in the Cock Lane ghost.

The Bennochs came to me from Albury—that is Tupper's house, near Guildford—and Martin Tupper, a singularly good-natured man, though I cannot read his books, had Alexander Smith down there during his stay in London. Besides an atrocious squint, which he cannot help, he was dirty to a degree quite incredible, discontented and conceited to a degree quite incredible, which he could. Mr. Tupper took him over that beautiful neighbourhood, but he expressed no pleasure in anything; he praised half-a-dozen lines of his which he repeated, upon which the poet observed, 'If I had known that you liked that passage, I would have left it out of the new edition.' This is a fact. He did act upon this original principle by cutting out bodily several lines praised by persons of taste, leaving those which went before and came after to join themselves as they could. He must be a little mad. At all events, his conduct at Albury lost him the patronage of Mr. Bennoch, who could and would have placed him in some commercial or manufacturing situation, where he would have had a decent competence, books, notice, and leisure to produce poetry, if the real thing were in him. There is an elder Tennyson, the third of the poet-brothers, who is about to print a volume—'better than Charles,' Mrs. Browning says—'worse than Alfred.' My reason for caring little about the mob of hack-writers to whom Mr. James belongs is their ignorance. They write, but they don't read. My most accomplished friends are Mr. Pearson, the Vicar of Sonning, the

bosom friend of Arthur Stanley—no author—and Mr. Bennoch, who has 'the faculty divine,' but not time to put it on paper. You would soon get tired of authors if you saw much of them. I have just received a very beautiful book from one who forms an exception to the rule—John Ruskin's new volume of the 'Stones.'

This is an adieu to dear Emily also. God bless you both!

Ever yours,

M. R. M.

MISS MITFORD *to* MR. STARKEY.

April 23, 1854.

I thank you heartily, dearest Mr. Starkey, first for liking my book so well, and then for telling me so. Certainly the kindness with which it was received is something most unusual, and has cheered me like a mark of personal interest. The only coldish notice (the *Athenæum*) came from an intimate friend,[1] for whom, in his secret tribulation of having two plays damned in a fortnight, I had felt and expressed a warm sympathy! And even this notice was only coldish by comparison, so glowingly kind have been the rest. *Your* own share of the praise, dearest Mr. Starkey, gave me a far higher degree of pleasure on account of my value for you, and I am particularly gratified by your approving the shorter stories. I myself had not read them for a dozen years until I saw them in the volumes, having been too ill to read

[1] Henry Chorley.

the proofs, and distrusted them so much that when I found Mr. Colburn and Mr. Hurst (in whose hands both they and some of the plays were) would not let us publish the one without the other, I undertook 'Atherton,' unfit as I was for such an exertion,[1] in order to give some little value, some little body to the work. I am so glad that you and Mrs. Starkey like it! The portrait is no more like Haydon's picture than it is like me. There is a wood-cut in last Saturday's *Illustrated News* which is better, and by far the best of the many scores that have been taken is a photograph from John Lucas' picture, coloured by an eminent miniature painter now in the possession of Mr. Bennet, the picture itself being in America.

You will like in your kindness to hear how I am. These east winds have been horribly against me. Mr. May has at last confessed that in that unhappy overturn the spine was seriously injured, which accounts at once for the total loss of muscular power in the body and lower limbs, and for the terrible pain of all the nerves of the back, especially those over the breastbone and under the arms.

God bless you, dear friend!

Ever yours, M. R. M.

The following is enclosed, June 23, 1854, to Mr. Starkey for Miss Jephson:—

I am delighted to hear again from you, my beloved Emily, above all to receive a letter so cheerful and so full of health, mental and bodily. It is very good

[1] 'Atherton' has been called 'Sunlight in suffering.'

in you to like 'Atherton' so well. Some of the warmth in your praise is perhaps partiality, but then I do not wish that less. It is, however, sure that both by the press and the public that work has been received with an enthusiasm quite wonderful in this war time. They say that it is the only new work that has been in great request this spring, and such has been the demand that Mr. Mudie (who keeps a great circulating library in London) told my publisher that he had four hundred copies in circulation and found them insufficient. This is a real success, and very pleasant to hear. Besides this the letters I receive from the persons whom I most wish to please (you and Mr. Starkey, my dear Emily, among the first) have given me a gratification better, I hope, than vanity, with more heart in it and more thankfulness. The exertion, however, certainly did me much harm, and was greater far than would be gathered from the preface, since, according to my old theory and my old practice that without pains there is no real good writing, I think, for anybody, I am sure for me, I actually wrote almost every line of that story three times over, and, although much disfigured by misprints, since the original printer having failed early in the volume, it was delayed for three weeks and then hurried through the press in three days (again almost killing me), yet it owes to that care the appearance of ease which people are so good as to like in it. You who take so niece-like an interest in my poor doings will like to know that the scenery (allowing for some little embellishment of the hall and park) is true—at least, was so fifty years ago, when my father, mother,

and myself went more than once to stay at the Great Farm, whose occupants (a Mrs. Hunt and her daughter) were very distantly related to my maternal grandmother. It was exactly the scene of affluent hospitality which I have described, and Mrs. Hunt was in person a character not unlike Mrs. Bell, whilst her daughter, an elegant woman, bore some resemblance to Mrs. Warne. They drove their close carriage, and Joseph was quite a real person. The name of the village was Lockinge, situated in the midst of the great Berkshire downs, about four miles from Wantage, and quite, I think, as beautiful a scene. The Hall belonged to Mr. Bastard, then M.P. for Devonshire, who, residing in that county, let the park to Mr. Hunt, and I well remember how I loved to take a book and sit in an old-fashioned, gloomy grotto under a wood-covered bank. The mother and daughter are both dead, her children have settled in America. The last I heard of Lockinge was from the Duke of Devonshire, who came to see me on his way home from a visit he had been paying to the then occupant of the Hall—I think Sir Harry Martin. I wonder if he recognized the scenery! I only once saw it in the summer, when my father was on the grand jury at Abingdon and left us there; but I was twice or three times there with him for the sake of coursing in the early autumn, and the place has always hung on my memory. The people are of course creations; I find Katy the general favourite; some scold because I did not marry her, but I hate early marriages, and wanted to show a bright, healthy youthfulness, too busy and too happy for the folly and vanity of a premature

love; others say it should have been three volumes, but then the secret must have leaked out. It is better that people should find fault with it as too short than as too long. You know of course that it has been some weeks in a second edition, and it will soon, I suppose, go into a third. Now, my dearest, this is twenty times more than I have either written or said to anyone about 'Atherton,' but I thought you would like to know all I could tell you. For the most part my letters are mere bulletins, for I have, as you suspect, gained no ground this cold weather. One day only I was wheeled into K.'s bed-room, while this of mine was well dry-rubbed, carpets taken up, and so forth, but not wetted, for Dr. May dreads the slightest cold, and I myself feel how little I can bear. People have the trick of coming from London to see me and returning at night, but kind as it is, if these visits come too closely (as one week I had four) they upset me for a fortnight or a month. Above all, if they stay too long, for I am just as cheerful and excitable as ever, and talk within an inch of my life, or still more, if they arrive too early. I ought only to see one person a day for a short time; but people are very inconsiderate, and the number that come and that write would astonish you. I only just saved myself from the additional suffering of bed-sores by adopting a water-cushion to sit and lie upon (an air-cushion is no use for that purpose), and an air-cushion for the back.

Well, my dear love, I have dwelt too long upon a subject I hate to write upon; but I know your anxiety. The chief suffering at present besides the

weakness and the weariness is the horrible neuralgic jar which runs through every limb, often without any apparent cause, always when people attempt to shake hands or to move me in the slightest degree. The pain under the arms is at present, thank heaven! better. For the rest people are exceedingly good, for even the troublesome mean, I believe, to be kind, and little Miss Mary is a great comfort and delight. Your charming description of Miss Emily would almost serve for her—she is the brightest, merriest, happiest creature that ever existed—knowing fewer words, I think, than six months ago. You know she was a year old the second of last January, but everybody takes her for a twelvemonth older, she is so tall, so large, and so active, understanding everybody, and making herself understood in spite of her want of language. Such a mimic never was seen. She comes to my door knocking with her little clenched fist every time she can escape from her father and mother and the maid, and in imitation, we suppose, of her brother, folds her little hands every night and says, 'Bless papa and mamma and poor *Ba*,' the hideous name (nobody can guess why) she will call me. She knows all my things for use or wearing, and is furiously angry if anything she has been accustomed to see in my room meets her eye out of it. 'Ba's,' she says upon such occasions. 'Poor Ba's,' 'My Ba's.' In the same way she brings me all newspapers, letters, flowers, and books, and would certainly fight for the possession of a letter especially, which it is her great delight to deliver with her own hand. I suppose she is pretty, everybody

says so, coloured like certain balsams and carnations, with the skin of the texture of a rose-leaf, exquisite blue eyes, a merry, round face, a little figure admirably formed with dimples instead of joints, and lovely golden hair curling round her white neck, and two or three shades lighter than her long eyelashes. How I wish I could see you, my dearest, and that we could compare our pets! Do contrive hereafter that they should know each other. I am sure that you would like both K., who is so clever, in spite of a certain contempt for books, and Sam, who, on the other hand, has a great knowledge of them, and, but for his real modesty, would strike everybody as a particularly well-informed person. I am afraid that I shall lose dear Mr. Kingsley. His sweet wife can only live at Torquay, so that he will get leave of absence, and be backwards and forwards at Eversley, and he is a neighbour to regret. Dear Mr. Crowther! say everything for me to him. I hear a good deal of Cheltenham, and am quite sure that place of pretension and narrowness will not suit him. Mr. Fields was to have been here in England this month, but his visit is deferred till the next, and I have some notion will not take place this year. This is only my feeling, for he says he is coming. So say the Brownings from Italy, and Mr. Boner from Germany. The little Browning boy suffered from malaria at Rome, but is, I think, recovering. John Ruskin has sent me from Rouen the most exquisite photograph of street and cathedral architecture ever seen. I hear a great deal of this war from one and another. Everybody seems to have sons or nephews

afloat or ashore. My young neighbour, Sir Charles Russell, who is in the Grenadier Guards, sent us a most interesting letter the other day with an account of a visit to Abd-el-Kader, and an ascent of Mount Olympus. How strange these names sound in correspondence! A friend of mine was telling me last week that his cousin had married a Greek. 'Is he a merchant?' said I. 'No,' replied he, 'he is a member for Sparta!'

I have not written a letter one third the length of this these ten months, dear Emily; but it must serve a long while. Let dear Mr. Starkey see it. God bless you!

Ever yours,
M. R. MITFORD.

P.S.—Is there to be any 'Life' of Miss Edgeworth?

MISS MITFORD *to* MISS JEPHSON.

July 12, 1854.

MY VERY DEAR EMILY,

Since my last letter I have been much worse, and although a little revived I still continue so. The cause was a visit from a favourite friend, Charles Boner, of whom I must have spoken to you. He came to England a year before he intended that he might see me once again, and the excitement and exertion of talking with him brought on such exhaustion and such a struggle for breath that both K. and Sam believed me dying. Mr. May has in consequence prohibited all visitors, and has written himself

to Mr. Harness, who had talked of coming for some weeks to a lodging in the village, not to come, and I feel that he is right. He even stints Lady Russell to ten minutes, and wants to stint her to five. So much as under other circumstances I should have been delighted to see him, it is better that dear Mr. Starkey should not have come. Charles Boner, whose book on chamois shooting is one of the most interesting works I know, sent this spring through his friend, the Prince of Leiningen, a paper on some improvements in the rifle to Prince Albert, who was much struck with it, and, being now in London, he has been with the Prince, who was still more struck by what passed between them, gave him a letter to the authorities at the Horse Guards, and sent the Woolwich people to regret his presence at a council there. So they are in high consultation, and as Mr. Boner will return by Paris, he will probably communicate also with my emperor (he is an intimate friend of his cousin, the Countess Stephanie Tascher de la Pagerie[1]) whose knowledge of that subject is very great. It is universally admitted now that Louis Napoleon's 'History of Artillery' is the best book on firearms. I can answer for the preface as more amusing and curious than anything since Southey's articles in the 'Quarterly.' It will be very interesting to have a graphic report of such an interview. He came by Paris, and says the beauty of the city and the contentment of the people are equally striking. He has not been there these six years, and says it is like magic to see how all that was sordid

[1] The Empress Josephine's father was Tascher de la Pagerie.

and squalid has vanished, and been replaced by the grand, the beautiful, and the comfortable—the people, I mean the working classes, never being forgotten for a moment. It is strange how all the world has come round to the respecting that great man—a far greater than the first Napoleon, because rather an administrator than a conqueror; one who strives to make his subjects happy rather than to enlarge his domains, a just and noble ambition. Tell dear Mr. Starkey that I hear that the original 'Plurality of Worlds' is by Dr. Whewell, of Trinity (I mean the one that maintains that our globe is the only one inhabited); an answer to it, which has attracted far more attention here in England, is by Dr. Brewster. I have read neither. I have just received with one of his charming letters, dear Mr. Kingsley's 'Edinburgh Lectures,' and am charmed to find that in the preface he pays a noble tribute to Cambridge, where, as he says, he 'learnt to learn.' It does honour to the author of 'Alton Locke' to offer this testimony at this moment. Also I have had one of the most interesting letters I ever received, from one of whom I have lately heard much, Mr. T. Taylor—certainly the highest toned of all the 'Punch' and 'Household Words' school—a Cambridge scholar, who, to maintain his mother and sisters, submitted to very distasteful literary toil, even theatrical burlesques, but who has come out of it unstained, and will be, I predict, amongst the most eminent of our new writers. He has now a place of £800 a year as secretary to the Board of Health. I forgot to tell dear Mr. Starkey how heartily I preferred Mr. Archer's

letters to Lord John's in their recent skirmish. Poor Moore cut a worse figure even than his editor, and that is saying much.

And now, my dear friend, good night. Miss Mary is bright and blooming as ever, in spite of four double teeth just piercing through. Kiss Miss Emily for me. God bless them both!

Ever your affectionate

M. R. MITFORD.

MISS MITFORD *to* MISS JEPHSON.

July 20, 1854.

Ah, dearest Emily, 'thrown back' is not the word! You judge me by my letters and my books. The head is mercifully spared, but for above six months I have been steadily growing worse and worse, and weaker and weaker. Mr. Boner's visit was a shake of the glass, but every day the sands run lower and lower. It is sad to write so to you, but it is the truth. Champagne and nourishing food keep me alive and stimulating medicine. To-day is fine, and I sit by my open window enjoying the balmy air, although too much sunk in the chair to see more than the trees and the sky, and a bit of distant road, but still enjoying *that*. My roses are very beautiful, and I have many of the old moss, which are delicately sweet; and common white pinks, almost like cloves in their fragrance. I rejoice, dearest, in your garden. I can't help telling you, or rather transcribing for you, what Mr. Fields (his house, Ticknor and Fields, is the greatest publishing house in America)

says of the reception of 'Atherton,' which, owing to Mr. Hurst sending only part of the sheets, has but just come out in the States. It seems very vain, but it will give you nearly as much pleasure as it does to myself, for your feeling towards me has always borne the character of family affection.

'And now I must tell you with what delight I have read "Atherton," and how everybody is charmed with it. Whittier wrote me to-day a note filled with expressions of his gratitude to you for writing such an exquisite story. Every page is a gem, and our newspapers and periodicals are out-vying each other in their words of praise. I know of no book that has appeared for years which has been received with such an outburst of applause.'

This is no common testimony from a publisher.

My dramatic works are to appear, they tell me, immediately. They were printed, and the preface to them was written last summer, but I can hardly expect another such success as 'Atherton'—the only book that has made a hit this spring.

Read 'Chamois Shooting,' if you can. It is full of interest, and most different from the run of sporting books in its perfect truth, the absence of all exaggeration—but indeed the author is a very admirable person.

I regret not having known Mr. Starkey, and yet I do know him, and can quite fancy what he is in conversation.

M. R. Mitford.

CHAPTER XV.

LETTERS FROM MISS JEPHSON, W. S. LANDOR, AND MISS MITFORD—LAST ILLNESS AND DEATH OF MARY RUSSELL MITFORD.

MISS JEPHSON writes to Mr. Starkey under date August 2 :—

Dear Miss Mitford's letter, which I enclose, is still more touching than the last. She seems to know that the last great change is fast approaching, and yet to have such a calm and cheerful mind, thinking of her friends' pleasures, and making little arrangements for a time when she will be no more. Would to God that I knew more certainly than I do that the great thing of all is not wanting. It has always been a subject of great anxiety to me about her. I know that at one time she did not believe in the divinity of Our Lord, and this seems to me a most dangerous error. But a great change may have taken place in her opinions since that time (for it was many years ago), when she expressed to me her *leaning* towards the Unitarian creed, for I think it was no more. When her father was in his last illness, she read to

him St. John's Gospel by preference, and he of all others teaches us that great truth, that Christ is God. You see that she speaks in this letter of the comfort that a good pastor can give.

Enclosure from Miss Mitford.

Yes, dearest Emily, I have most beautiful roses. I found some of the old sorts and brought some of that exquisite rose *des quatre saisons* which smells so exactly like the attar of roses, moss roses, maiden blush, double Scotch, and many others. Then my only expense was for thirty of the very best standards, some low, some high. Then my house was planted by two Hertfordshire friends, and the trees are now climbing above the parlour windows, and will soon cover the house with the very choicest sorts. Then I have a rose hedge round the front court, so you see we abound. There is a moss maiden blush which in beauty, in fragrance, and in mossiness excels anything I ever saw. I don't know its name, but it is more beautiful than either the pink or the white moss rose, fond as I am of the first. I have also a white globe which is more beautiful than any I ever saw, purer, rounder, more perfect in every way; it was sent to me years ago by poor Mr. Milton, Mrs. Trollope's brother. All the gardeners say it is the best white they ever saw. I have told Sam to send you a plant of this rose, and roots of the *Fleur de Lys*, and the double wood anemone. Have you these pretty flowers? I only wish I knew how to make over to you my other roses, but I fear they would not travel. You must write to tell Sam how to send flower roots

when the time comes, and he can add those common and fragrant white pinks which will grow like a weed. Rare flowers I have none, and my little pit has only served to keep alive scarlet geraniums, and common verbenas, fuchsias, &c., for planting out. Still my little garden, full of fruit and flowers (the vegetables being kept out of sight), quite cottage-like, pleases everybody, and Miss Mary runs about in it all the day long. After passing eighteen months with the reputation of being the best and quietest child possible, she has taken to crying after her father, who spoils her more than the rest, and whom she cannot bear out of her sight. I do hope that your sweet Emmy and she will some day know each other. The other day I had an interesting account of the Alhambra from a friend just returned from Spain. The exquisite fretted work of the ceilings &c. has faded quite white except in a very few shaded places. Enough, however, of the colours remains there to enable the patterns to be made out, and Government are going to restore these magnificent works to as nearly their old state as possible. Nothing ever approached their lightness, delicacy, and beauty. The imitation in the Crystal Palace is like, they say, but conveys no idea of their matchless grace. I am a little revived by the sweet summer air which breathes around me through the open window. You will like to hear that my dear friend Mr. Pearson gives me the comfort that a good pastor brings.

Ever, dearest friend, your affectionate,

M. R. MITFORD.

I kept this letter, my beloved friend (it is now the 29th of July, 1854), the rather that the heats of last week and this week almost killed me. At present we have real cold weather again, which has revived me. Mr. May said yesterday that I was decidedly better, but then I had had some sleep after three nights of absolute sleeplessness. Last night I again passed without closing my eyes, but (a more hopeful 'but' than the last) I have a new chair coming, certainly more roomy, and, I hope, more comfortable than my present. A day or two ago that remarkable man Mr. Landor sent me some verses, the most beautiful of the very many that have been addressed to me. He must be eighty. They will probably appear in the *Examiner*. Did I ever send you Dr. Parsons' magnificent stanzas on a bust of Dante? He too has addressed some to me, which I have not seen, but which Mr. Fields says are exquisite. I was much amused by a passage in one of Sir C. Russell's letters the other day (which carried me back to the days of Hogarth and Smollett and the old caricatures written and engraved) on our Gallic neighbours. He says, 'The French soldiers spend all their spare time in hunting frogs. They continue to be as much eaten as ever by French epicures, but only the thighs, which are very small and tender and delicate, and are either taken as a fricandeau or a fricassée.'

The following letter conveyed the poem from Walter Savage Landor:—

Bath, July 24 [No year].

DEAR MISS MITFORD,

It would be ingratitude in me who have received so much enjoyment and instruction from your writings were I never to make an acknowledgment of it. My only hesitation in sending these verses was occasioned by the fear that, in an excess of politeness, you might fancy it necessary to write a line in reply. Pray do not think of it. Your friend Miss Day will inform me of your health, which I most anxiously hope is improving.

Believe me, dear Miss Mitford,
Yours sincerely,
W. S. LANDOR.

The following was the poem enclosed :—

To Mary Russell Mitford.

The hay is carried, and the hours
Snatch, as they pass, the linden flowers;
And children leap to pluck a spray
Bent earthward, and then run away.
Park-keeper! catch me those grave thieves
About whose frocks the fragrant leaves,
Sticking and fluttering here and there,
No false nor flattering witness bear.

I never view such scenes as these,
In grassy meadows girt with trees,
But comes a thought of her who now
Sits with serenely patient brow
Amid deep sufferings; none hath told
More pleasant tales to young and old.
Fondest was she of Father Thames,
But rambled to Hellenic streams;

Nor even there could any tell
The country's purer charms so well
As Mary Mitford. . . .
Verse! go forth
And breathe o'er gentle breasts her worth.
Needless the task; but should she see
One hearty wish from you and me,
A moment's pain it may assuage,
A rose-leaf on the couch of Age.

WALTER SAVAGE LANDOR.

MISS JEPHSON *to* MR. STARKEY.

August 10, 1854.

MY DEAR MR. STARKEY,

The enclosed letters came this morning. I have only omitted some passages which would not interest you. Is it not very strange in Miss Mitford to take the part of Mr. Carden against Miss Arbuthnot, the sister and friend who so courageously and effectually defended her? The 'attack' was *his*, not theirs; they only assisted Miss A. in repulsing them, and to call their efforts in so good a cause 'vixenish attacks' appears to me most unjust censure. If they had screamed and fainted, some people, perhaps, would have thought them more feminine and interesting, but I do not think their brave defenders would have felt the same zeal in their cause. As to Mr. Carden's motive, I think it may be easily guessed, when Miss A. has so large a fortune. I see no cause to admire his conduct in the fray. His party was by far the strongest, and yet he ordered his men to fire upon the less numerous and unarmed defenders of Miss Arbuthnot.

Enclosure:—

'I thought I had sent you these noble lines,[1] dearest Emily; you must give no copy of them—that is a condition. They are by very far the finest stanzas that ever left America, and the author, a young but already celebrated physician of Boston—celebrated, I mean, for medical skill—has written a poem on the death of Daniel Webster very nearly as fine. This grand poem was prefixed to a translation of a few cantos of the "Inferno" (the translation is not equal to these original stanzas—it would have been strange if it had been!), and that and his increasing practice prevented his going on with his version. The monody on Daniel Webster was printed on a detached sheet, and of course sent to me, and the author was so pleased with my praise of that poem that he sent about amongst his friends begging for a copy of the Dante to send me, having none himself. His letters, too, are delightful. He does not care for my prose, but calls "Rienzi" the best modern play. Mr. Fields tells me that he has a volume of poems in the press, amongst which is one exquisitely beautiful, addressed to me. I have not seen it. Mr. Landor's poem is at the end of a very short notice of my dramatic works in the last number of the "Examiner." It begins with a very beautiful summer picture, and is a most remarkable production of a man turned eighty; but of course Dr. Parsons' poem will be still finer. I have had quantities of such tributes in my life—two very fine things—but these, coming so late, are like gleams

[1] On 'Dante,' by Dr. Parsons.

of sunshine in my sick-room. I hope that my grateful pleasure is of a deeper sort than mere vanity. There is no doubt that Dr. Parsons will be the great poet of America if his life be spared.

'I must, I think, have spoken to you of my beloved friend, Hugh Pearson—not the young man you imagine, but the most accomplished as well as the most amiable person that I have ever known. He is the bosom friend of Arthur Stanley, and sees all his works through the press, a great friend of Alfred Tennyson's, one of Mr. Gladstone's Oxford committee, the youngest man upon it—altogether, a most distinguished man of letters, although too much engrossed by his own large parish (Sonning), and too excellent a parish priest to think of authorship. Unhappily, he is eight miles off, but he gets to me as often as he can. I always loved him better than any man alive, and he is truly attached to me. I trust dear Mr. Starkey will soon recover; love to him. I am as when I wrote last. Do you know anything of Mr. Carden or the poor young woman? Everybody approves the sentence.

'P.S.—*August* 5. Since writing the above I have read Mr. Carden's speech, which is very discerning, also his conduct in the fray, not returning the vixenish female attacks, was manly. What did he want of her? That is the puzzle. Lady Russell, who knew the whole family some years ago, says that the youngest of them must be much turned of thirty, and is very plain. He must be a little wrong in his head. The *Times*, speaking of him, says that, "besides his English adventures," they happen to know of certain

"attempts" (I think, or "intentions," I am not sure which) "in the land of romance called Spain." Can he have been one of the admirers of that enchanting empress who never danced with a man without turning his head? It would have been a curious descent to have thought of her, and then to get into such a scrape for Miss Arbuthnot.'

On the 3rd of October Miss Jephson writes to Mr. Starkey:

'I wish you had been here when the news arrived that Sebastopol was taken. Poor Mrs. Halloran ran here, the paper in her hand, on Sunday morning when I was at breakfast, saying, 'Sebastopol is taken!' She cannot hear the fate of her nephew for some days, but she had letters from him after his landing on the Crimea. He wrote upon his shako reversed and placed on the sand, and had lain two nights on the ground; the last it rained incessantly, but he was not the worse for it, and was in high spirits. The landing of that immense armament on the shores of the Crimea was, he said, the finest thing that could be imagined; the horses were thrown overboard, and swam ashore.'

Miss Jephson sends a quotation from a letter of Miss Mitford in which she says: 'I do really believe that it is owing to my being full of life at the heart that I am still alive. I cling to life.'

MISS MITFORD *to* MISS JEPHSON.

October 5, 1854.

MY BELOVED FRIEND,

Thank you for those texts. They are most comfortable. Some are the more welcome that I am at present reading exclusively the New Testament, finding something fresh in the gospels at every reading. These I have just finished, going through them for the third time consecutively. William Harness says that 'Christ is one with God.' He adds: 'I do not know if this be orthodox, but it is what I feel,' and surely in thinking of that divine teaching of Him who came 'to seek and to save,' it is a comfort so to feel. Thank you again, beloved friend! My own faith is, I suspect, not very orthodox. I believe in the whole Christian church, whatever be the differences of sect or government. How infinitely small are those differences compared with the great accordance! I never venture to think that anyone who seeks God in sincerity and strives to obey His holy laws can be lost. My only doubts are of myself, because I know so much of my own sins, and my present shortcomings, and a little perhaps because I feel myself to be so much over-valued. Then I cling to life even whilst I say, 'His will be done!' and pray for a cheerful submission. Well, at all events, I am hopeful for others.

William Harness says he wishes there were a few men like Hugh Pearson in Ireland, for that from what he sees of the clergy he thinks all their religion is merged in a desire to proselytize. He is in Dublin now, where Captain Harness has been

sent on some important Government mission. Mrs. Hope, though a Frenchwoman, is a devout and steady Protestant, niece of the celebrated physician, Dr. Pichard, and her husband has none of his father's scepticism or his mother's indifference. William Harness himself has neither Catholic nor Puseyite tendencies—only it is a large and liberal mind like Bishop Stanley's, believing good men and good Christians may exist amongst Papists, and will be as safe there as if they were Protestants. For my own part I have seen such misery follow from distrusting a settled faith, that I should hesitate from converting anyone from Papistry to Protestantism for fear of the injury done to the mind by such a demolition of old associations. Dryden somewhere says, not in these words, but to this effect, 'that the soul is like a bird at roost which, plucked violently from its branch, flutters here and there, and refuses to settle again.' By the way, do you know Arthur Stanley's life of his father? I think that if I were compelled to choose between the two I should prefer *that* life even to the life of Dr. Arnold, and the good bishop himself was charming. I see plenty of letters from the landing-place, Sir Charles Russell being a most attentive and copious correspondent, and the mothers, sisters, and wives of many of his brother-officers interchanging letters with Lady Russell (indeed, there is a whole net-work of cousinships and inter-marriages), which letters she always brings to me. They show a good deal more of depression and anxiety (I am speaking now of their general tone ever since they have been in Turkey and its de-

pendencies) than you would expect from thoughtless, gay young men. I suppose the cause of this is the long peace, which has prevented their becoming accustomed to danger. Also I am sorry to say there is a most affectionate chorus of regrets for the comforts and accommodations of English life. Think of people bemoaning and be-pitying themselves because on the night of landing they were forced to sup on bread and pork, and brandy-and-water! After all I have not a doubt but these fine guardsmen when once in front of the enemy fought bravely. At present I am forced to play the comforter to my beloved friend, Lady Russell, who was yesterday, and has been every day since the news of the first battle came, 'like Niobe—all tears.' Now there is terrible anxiety caused by the interval between the announcement of the fight and the list of the killed and wounded. By the way, nothing done by our ministry has pleased me so well as the intention of the Duke of Newcastle to publish the names of the common soldiers as well as the officers. No doubt it is borrowed from or suggested by Louis Napoleon. It is thoroughly in his way, and unlike stiff puppets of routine. I have not seen poor Lady Russell to-day, and am expecting Hugh Pearson. I am often hopeful for myself; it is only by fits that I despond.

Ever yours,

M. R. MITFORD.

MISS MITFORD *to* MR. STARKEY.

November 10, 1854.

MY DEAR MR. STARKEY,

I don't know anything on your side the channel that would give me greater pleasure than your kind approbation of my plays. When once one has tasted one's fill of praise one becomes dainty therein, and cares for it only according to the estimate in which one holds the praiser. Vain as it seems to say so, that has been long my case, and would probably have been so (or, rather, perhaps is so) without the conceited clause. Of course the public recognition is a pleasure, but that derived from individual approbation would be of very little worth if it were not backed up by the talent and taste of the individual himself. 'Rienzi' had its full share of applause when acted, although Mr. Young vulgarized it as much as possible, never speaking a line as it was written, and once at Newcastle transposing a whole scene —that is, he spoke one scene the wrong, while his fellow-actors were speaking the other the right. Although an enormous Mrs. Faucitt and a long, reed-like girl Miss Phillips contended for weakness and stupidity in Lady Colonna and Claudia, yet such was the power of the play that it crammed Drury Lane Theatre upwards of a hundred nights during the two years that Mr. Young remained on the stage, and gave me the pleasure of hearing the pit stop the applause of the boxes that they might not lose a word that the actors spoke. In a somewhat slighter degree all my tragedies had this sort of success, being all of them, in the fullest sense of the word, act-

ing plays, plays of whose effect you cannot judge until you see them upon the stage. But they require great actors and actresses who have at least truth and feeling. You will now understand why the three new ones, 'Gaston,' 'Inez,' and 'Otto,' being literally impounded at Mr. Colburn's, he having in his hands the only copies in existence—by copies I mean the only MS. I was induced, in order to get them properly brought out, to permit the stories that followed 'Atherton' to be collected and published, and finally, in order to give a little *body* to the prose work (as people say of wine), to write 'Atherton' itself. Even the plays that were printed were as full of *errata* as of lines, having been finally reprinted, by a man of the name of Cumberland, after the actors, copying faithfully all their blunders, so that seventeen editions (each charged at 3*s.* 6*d.*) of 'Rienzi' went forth to the world after Mr. Young's version. Really one is very glad that such copies should be lost. Now there are two volumes that will take their place with their elders and betters, Massinger and company, in great public and private libraries (they are selling in that way slowly and gradually, but steadily and well), and stand a chance of representation, if ever there be again an English theatre, which will inevitably happen if ever there be again either a good actress or a great actor.[1] Of this there is a better chance since Macready has left the stage, and his most offensive mannerism will die

[1] Miss Mitford's surmise proved correct to some extent, for 'Rienzi' has lately been reproduced at Her Majesty's Opera House.

away. One great artist like John Kemble, one man of genius like Kean, one woman of sensibility and power, and the theatre would revive under their impulse. In the meanwhile, every week (I had well-nigh said every day) brings a letter from some one whom I most wished to please: yourself, or John Ruskin, or him of the 'Dante Verses,' Dr. Parsons; preferring my tragedies to my other works, and I am well content to have made a large sacrifice in money (for I could have had double what I did receive for my last prose work, if not clogged with the condition of producing the dramatic works in the most solid form), even to have injured my health by the writing 'Atherton' when so unfit for exertion, rather than 'die and leave no sign' of the plays which alone gave me pleasure in the conception and realization. Forgive all this egotism, but you pulled the string, and must submit to receive the shower-bath. One other thing I cannot help telling you. Such is the success of 'Atherton' in America that they have stereotyped the work—a very rare and a very true test of sale. Also they have made an American engraving of John Lucas's portrait, taken three years ago, which is admirable for likeness and for character. In spite of which, a friend of mine was to send down an artist, a stranger, to take my portrait now! for, reduced to skin and bone, the features all sharpened, but the life remaining, and perhaps increased by the contrast, she wants it perpetuated. It would have killed me as certain as a cannon ball, for it was evidently an oil-painting, not a drawing. He inquired about lodgings; and my hold on life is as

fragile as that of a November leaf to an elm-tree. But people who talk to me for half an hour are as much deceived as you who read my letters, and take the life of mind for life of body. Medical men and clergymen, who know well the physical symptoms of decay, are astonished at me, and go away wondering. To me it seems that there must be a good deal of giving way in those persons who put on constant outward signs of languishing—a sort of perpetual whine, mental and bodily. It is quite as easy to be cheerful as to assume a dismal sort of patience, and very much better for all parties, the sick and the well. In good part, this is no doubt a question of temperament, and Mr. May says I kill myself by over excitement and over exertion. Well, better that the sword should wear the scabbard, than it should rust itself out. Still, dear friend, I fear you will be a false prophet; there is no real change, and for ten days, in consequence of the thoughtlessness and selfishness of others, I fell back utterly. Two days ago I rallied again, and I am giving you the benefit of my first good spirits. I now write two or three confidential lines. In case dear Emily should have told you of an application, volunteered, to the Queen for an increase of pension by my kind neighbour, the Dean of Windsor, and of the result, remember that it is a profound secret. Her Majesty would be much displeased and I much pained, if it were mentioned, more especially if it got into the papers. Even Captain and Miss Harness do not know it, though I thought it due to dear Emily's long friendship to acquaint her. I do

not myself yet know the final result—the immediate effect was a cheque on Coutts' for £50. It was not I who originated the application, but my kind neighbour, Mr. Wellesley, and he and Her Majesty are most earnest in their desire that it should be strictly private. It is this terrible illness which renders another servant necessary, and doubles almost every expense, which alone could make such assistance needful. But even the visitors who come to inquire from great distances, and many of them, under one name or other, take dinner, increase the expenditure of my little household more than would be believed —our postage stamps average more than a shilling a day.

Thank you and dear Mrs. Starkey for your great kindness respecting my dear friends the Harnesses. I take for granted that Captain Harness is a superior man, since all governments apply to him in their troubles. I also take for granted that he has not the social charm of his delightful brother, or I should have heard of it. But then, very few have! He passed almost all his time at Blaney Castle when in Ireland, Mr. Hope's. Some day or other you will know William Harness, and you will be friends. Besides his varied accomplishments, and his admirable goodness and kindness, he has all sorts of amusing peculiarities. With a temper never known to fail, an indulgence the largest, a tenderness as of a woman, he has the habit of talking like a cynic! and with more learning, ancient and modern, and a wider grasp of literature than almost anyone I know, pro-

fesses to read nothing and care for nothing but 'Shakespeare and the Bible.' He is the finest reader of both that I ever heard. His preaching, which has been so much admired, is too rapid, but his reading the prayers is perfection. The best parish priest in London, and the truest Christian. There is nobody like him. Just hear his sister upon that chapter. Thank you, and thank dear Mrs. Starkey, for your kind intention of calling there. I fear the young niece is very ill.

Ah! this war! My friend, Lady Russell, who comes to me every day, will die of it. Her eldest son, the stay of the family, is a captain in the Grenadier Guards, and the poor mother is ten years older since the Battle of the Alma. She shows me all Sir Charles's letters. I heard to-day from another friend, whose first cousin, Sir Charles Hamilton, led the Fusileers up the heights. He was sent home for promotion; lost two horses, shot under him; will have to be sent back again, and is half ruined by the expense. The French manage things better. A charming countrywoman of yours, Sir George Shee's sister, wrote me yesterday an amusing story. A French soldier, mortally wounded, asked the priest if Sebastopol was taken, because, said he, 'I should like to tell Marshal St. Arnaud.'

God bless you! This is my ninth letter.

Ever faithfully yours,

M. R. MITFORD.

MISS JEPHSON *to* DIGBY STARKEY, ESQ.

November 9, (1854?)

MY DEAR MR. STARKEY,

Perhaps you and Miss Mitford have been writing to each other all this time. I had a very long letter from her, dated 6th of October. A great part of it would not, I think, interest you particularly, so I will only transcribe what relates to Mrs. Opie. She says:—

'I knew her as a Quakeress, and as the gayest and pleasantest member of the pleasantest and most intelligent society in London. Unluckily, as a Norwich woman, she was thrown among the Gurneys, and took a fancy to Joseph John, who, after she had very literally set her quaker's cap at him, married a pretty girl of seventeen. She had been previously engaged to Lord Herbert Stewart—a match which had gone off, because in that age, when broughams and pages were not, they could not muster money enough for such an establishment as their wants required in married people, so she remained the artist's widow, yearning ever after the quakerly proselytism for her old pleasant society, and certainly attending the May Meetings that she might creep into more parties under their cover. I myself have a pleasant proof of this hankering; a visiting-card on which is engraved the plain name, Amelia Opie, encircled by an embossed wreath of roses. Now the book should have taken this tone, or rather, as in the quaker part of her life, there was

nothing to tell, *that* should have been all rose-colour, whereas it is all *drab*—not one of the pleasant recollections, of which (except Mr. Rogers) she is the last, who can give authentic testimony. Think of a correspondent of Mrs. Inchbald, and a flirt of Godwin and Holcroft's; think of all that is buried under anti-slavery societies, and Joseph Lancaster's schools! If the quakers demanded a life to themselves, why not make over the materials to a literary friend, and have *two*.'

Mr. R. Bennett (Mrs. Halloran's nephew) was wounded at the battle of Inkerman—a ball passed through his leg, leaving the bone uninjured) so he is sent to Scutari, and thus perhaps his life will be saved, for he will escape the assault, and probably some battles. His colonel and his friend, Colonel Swyny, were killed by his side. He says, 'At one time I thought the Russians would have turned our position, and that all would have been lost. They had opened a tremendous fire of artillery on us, and under it masses of their infantry were advancing; at this moment we were ordered to retire, and thus were giving up our position on the heights. It was evident something decided must be done, or the enemy would be in the camp of the second division. Colonel Swyny (whether by order of the brigadier or not, I cannot say) ordered the 63rd to halt and front, and advanced to meet the enemy. The regiment obeyed, and immediately came to the charge, rushed over the crown of the hill, and sent the Russians, in awful confusion, into the valley below. 'Every man then kept up fire as long as a round of ball or

cartridge lasted, and when all was expended, they followed it up with *stones.*

Mrs. Halloran is come, and I shall be too late for the post if I say more.

Ever your affectionate sister,

E. JEPHSON.

MISS MITFORD *to* MISS JEPHSON.

November 28, 1854.

I thank you very much, dear Emily, for your double kindness—the flower seeds and Mrs. Starkey's attention to my friends. They seem absorbed by the illness of the poor girl. Her mother died young, which increases the anxiety. William Harness assures me that they are very sensible of Mr. and Mrs. Starkey's goodness, and were much delighted with both. They have in common the always having kept the very best company, so that, meeting on that table-land, all parties would be equally pleasant to deal with. I feel this kindness of your dear sister and my charming correspondent as if it were addressed personally to myself. Tell them so.

As yet, dear friend, I have escaped cold. Of course the fire is kept up night and day. Sir Charles was safe up to the last account. The badness of the generals, the insufficiency of the hospitals, and especially the want of surgeons, double the danger. We have nothing for us but the bravery of our English, French, and Turkish (for I do not join in the cry against those poor Turks, who could not have saved the batteries, and would only have been butchered

uselessly had they stayed) nothing but our common bravery, the certainty that Louis Napoleon will send all the men possible (of course this English government will not), and the goodness of our cause. I dare not therefore claim the protection of Providence, for it is amongst His mysteries that national success does not always go with the righteous cause. Finally, no doubt, the scales are held even, but He judges with a clearer sight, and often bides His time. What a mystery war is, look at it as we may! I have lost acquaintances in these battles, but as yet no friend. Amongst the young men whom I knew was Mr. John Wheble, the Catholic priest—not a convert, but belonging to an old race of English Catholics. He left much to take that dangerous duty; a slight, small, delicate young man, whose fortune was not less than £30,000, weak of body, but strong of heart, and sure to die if stricken with illness, because sure not to spare himself. He belongs to this neighbourhood, and was quite as much beloved by Protestants as by Roman Catholics; indeed, in his charities—and all his fortune was spent in charities—he made no sort of difference. I, who firmly believe that everyone who sincerely tries to follow the great rule of love which we find in the Gospel may find safety in that great sacrifice, whatever be his creed as to minor points, always rejoice to find such an example as that of poor John Wheble. I believe that his tolerance was constant and sincere. I know that dear Lady Russell's is so. Whatever be the theory of the Roman Catholic faith, happy they whose large-hearted tolerance has room for all!

Surely St. Paul, in that passage on charity, which, next to the Sermon on the Mount, seems to me the most beautiful ever written, inculcates such doctrine! I have been thinking of these things, because I have been reading a novel called 'Philip Lancaster,' which a young friend of mine has just inscribed to me. I don't know if I have spoken to you of Maria Norris—have I? Her father, a very clever man, is a great paper-manufacturer, radical, and dissenter, just now one of the candidates for Abingdon. The daughter is a most able person, from nineteen to twenty-two, and her book, full of every sort of artistic fault, careless beyond all description, and with so many repetitions that she might make three volumes into two by the mere process of striking out what she has said twice over, is yet as full of promise as any work that has come out this year. So few dissenters write, or even read, novels, that a bold, uncompromising, candid, impartial book, which shows them as they are, faults, merits, and all, making fierce onslaughts upon their bigotry and intolerance, just as she does on High Church or Low Church, must needs be original and racy, and by taking for the scene of her story a real place (for fictitious scenery never looks true), she has added wonderfully to the local power. If you meet with it read it. There is much to blame—indeed, artistically speaking, almost everything—but it is resolutely true to her own impression, large-hearted, large-minded, charitable, eloquent, and bold, with strong, sterling English sense in every page. Still it will affront all parties, and stand a good chance, I should think, of costing her father his election.

Also I have been reading the 'Feuilletons of the Presse,' which contain the memoirs of Madame Sand. There is an exquisite bird-story, she being one of those who have the power of taming birds. This interests me much just now, for I told you, I think, my dear, of the robin that tapped at my window, and how we kept for him a tray full of bread-crumbs, to which he has now brought his kinsfolk and friends. He peeps in at the window when he has done his meal, and seems to like looking at me almost as well as I like to look at him. Besides this, the letters between George Sand's father and *his*—— [*The rest is wanting.*]

The following extracts were written by Miss Mitford towards the end of her life, and were given by Mr. Bennoch to Mr. S. C. Hall:—

To a Friend.

I do not know that I ever read a finer or truer sentiment than that passage in which you speak of 'giving first.' There is nothing so certain as that where we give what is of most value—that is kindness, we are pretty sure to have it returned—ay, very often with compound interest. It is the unloving who go through the world unloved, and then they speak of life as they have found it. You, my dear friend, are of a different stamp, and speak of the world as you have made it. For my own part I can truly say that my whole life would be too short to repay the twentieth part of the kindness that has come to me unsought. My only part being to receive and to

love again—poor payment; but yet such as spirits like yours accept in full.

How you spoil me, my very dear friend! Bodily by grapes and all sorts of dainties, mentally by liking my poor notes. The French have a famous book, 'A Journey round my Room'; but I cannot travel even so far as M. de Maistre, from the fire to the window is my longest ride, or rather my longest drive, and the most important event is the arrival of a fresh covey of robins and the emptying their dish of crumbs. We may all find pleasure if we choose to seek and to accept it—ay, and we may all give pleasure after our kind, even as the robins do by a cheerful taking. At that, dearest friend, I am ready enough, as you know to your cost, and I thank you for your intended present of grapes very heartily. I never thought to see that most rich and graceful of all fruit again. But, as I said before, you spoil me.

MISS JEPHSON *to* MR. STARKEY.

December 29, 1854.

MY DEAR MR. STARKEY,

Many thanks for your kind and good wishes for me. I rejoice to hear that Emily is quite well, and Edgeworth too recovered. The Mr. Hope who has purchased the Castle Blaney property is a son of 'Anastasius' Hope. I will transcribe Miss Mitford's letter, the part of it which relates to the Hopes:

'Dear William Harness is at Blaney Castle with Mr. Hope, who has purchased that beautiful and magnificent demesne, nearly all Castle Blaney, eighteen

thousand acres round it, and a fine house, magnificently situated. It stands (William says) on a precipitous wooded bank, looking down upon a beautiful lake of one thousand acres, with two or three picturesque islands, and finely wooded and varied shores, all this, and the opposite woods and hills, seen from the hall door and from the windows of the principal rooms. Mr. Hope's clear income from English landed property is £80,000 per annum, besides immense sums in capital and in collections of every sort. Two separate collections of pictures, one Italian, the other Dutch and Flemish, almost unmatched as belonging to a private man. William says that he has made this purchase chiefly to obtain a larger sphere of usefulness, adding, "and a little, perhaps, to show his administrative talent in the government of a neglected and improvable Irish estate. He will do immense things for the people, if they will lend themselves to his plans. It is not so much want of principle that makes them so difficult to deal with," pursues William, "as a sort of caprice on which there is no calculating, and for which it is impossible to detect any sort of reason." I don't think William likes the people so well on this second visit as he did on the first; he has been in Dublin with his brother, sent by Government on some mission (Captain Harness is a most distinguished engineer), and went to Donnybrook Fair—the dullest fair, he declares, that he ever saw. He makes one observation that is striking, that "whilst the children, mostly ugly, have yet an expression of fun which would do honour to Puck, the old people, and even the middle-aged, are the sad-

dest-looking race he ever beheld.' Is this true?

'Mr. Hope does everything with a magnificent largeness and liberality; some day or other I will tell you of the arrangements at the Deepdene, where every guest has a suite of rooms—five for a married couple, bed-chambers, chambers for the lady's-maid and the valet, and a sitting-room. It is at everybody's option to breakfast downstairs or up, the luncheon assembling the party at two o'clock. Single visitors have three rooms—a bed-room for themselves and their personal servant, and the never-forgotten sitting-room, full of books, French, German, and English, drawing materials, and music, with (I believe) a piano. I am afraid to tell you how many of these suites of apartments there are; the books are the newest and the best. You know that it is the very temple of art; but the master's conversation is the finest thing in it. He is the eldest son of the author of "Anastasius," a most active man of forty; he gives the highest wages, is princely in his housekeeping and in everything he does; but, like his father, keeps his own accounts, and won't be cheated. It's a mind like Napoleon's.'

Now I think that this is all I can find in Miss Mitford's letters about the Hopes. Mr. Harness is one of Charles Kemble's executors. I had a letter from Miss Mitford a few days ago dated December 22. She says: 'Last Saturday, my sixty-eighth birthday, began brightly, but ended in one of those frightful headaches which leave me prostrated for ten days. I am now getting very slowly and gradually better, but I never quite regain the strength I lose.'

The following is an extract from a letter addressed to Mrs. Crowther, and copied by Miss Jephson for Mr. Starkey. The date is January 1st, 1855 :—

'The longer I live the more I see that kindness, even although, as in my case, it has often been little more than kind intentions, is sure to be repaid, if not by the intended objects by other persons. For my own part, the goodness shown to me often draws tears into my eyes. People whom all the world knows, and yet more people of whom I have never heard, write to me, send to me whatever they think I shall like, call at my door (and, after getting to Reading by the Great Western, there are six miles out and back of fly carriage), come at any hour that I may appoint, if I be well enough to see them, and never take offence at a refusal. There is a reality about this when it has lasted above two years. Mr. May is just like a son to me, Lady Russell comes to see me every day like a sister, and I have two servants, very superior people, who nurse me just as if I were their mother. It has pleased Providence to preserve to me my calmness of mind and clearness of intellect, and also my powers of reading by day and by night, and, which is still more, my love of poetry and literature, my cheerfulness and my enjoyment of little things. This very day, not only my common pensioners the dear robins, but a saucy troop of sparrows and a little shining bird of passage whose name I forget, have all been pecking at once at their tray of bread-crumbs outside the window. Poor, pretty things! How much delight there is in these

common objects, if people would learn to enjoy them. I really think that the feeling for these simple pleasures is increasing with the increase of population.'

Miss Mitford's last letter to Miss Jephson is dated January 2nd, 1855. She refers to the exertion of writing the above letter :—

Yesterday, dearest Emily (New Year's Day), I had a terrible attack of retching, a new and very bad symptom. It came on after writing, and therefore I seize a calm moment to send you thanks and blessings, and to say that you will probably receive no more letters from your poor old friend.

May God be with you, and with all whom you love, especially Mr. and Mrs. Starkey, who have been so kind to me!

Little Mary is two years old to-day.

Ever faithfully yours,
M. R. MITFORD.

MISS MITFORD *to* MRS. BENNOCH.

January 7, 1855.

Thanks, dearest Mrs. Bennoch, for all your goodness past and present. May God long bless you and your dear husband with everything that kind hearts can wish!

There is wonderful vitality in me, and I have rallied to a certain point. But I must write no more notes or letters. They say that exhaustion of the brain from writing brought on the sickness that alarmed everyone on New Year's Day.

Your dear husband must come and see me—I suppose the 27th, but will let him know if not.

Ever yours,

M. R. MITFORD.

She died on the 10th of January.

Miss Jephson, in sending to Mr. Starkey on the 17th of January a copy of Miss Mitford's letter to Mrs. Crowther, dated January 1st, adds:—

'You and Isabella have indeed a right to this note of dearest Miss Mitford, for you see how she thought of you and of your kindness to her when she knew that she was dying.

'If you had seen her you would have known, even more than you can now do, how much there was in her to love as well as to admire; but then your grief would have been greater.

'Do you think that Miss Mitford's letters will be published? She is known to have been a charming letter-writer, and there must be an almost inexhaustible store of them, for she had numerous correspondents, and few people, I think, would destroy such letters.'

We here deposit our wreath on the tomb of Mary Russell Mitford. Our materials are not exhausted, but we have adduced a bright array of witnesses to her patience, cheerfulness, and rare mental endowments. She left the world richer for a noble example, and few have been so warmly loved or so deeply regretted by English hearts on both shores of the Atlantic.

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